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Abstract

This qualitative case study sought to understand what elements of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The researcher collected qualitative data from (a) 3 course observations (Observations 1, 2, and 3) of the 90 undergraduate business leadership students, (b) two interviews with the faculty participants teaching the undergraduate business leadership courses and 5 interviews with student participants enrolled in the undergraduate business leadership course and (c) document analysis of the course syllabi, textbook and extra credit assignments in relation to the study's Conceptual Model: Compassionate Leadership Skill Development.

This study identified four major components of compassionate leadership development within business leadership courses: (a) students can learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities, (b) students can learn to understand emotions through problem-based learning activities, (c) students can learn essential interpersonal skills through groupwork, and (d) the use of emotions to facilitate thinking when participating in design thinking projects. Results from this study can contribute to further exploration of the components in business leadership courses that help students develop compassionate leadership skills.

Keywords: compassionate leadership, emotional intelligence, business leadership course, undergraduate business students, experiential learning activities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Compassion, in the form of empathy, concern, care, and consideration for others, is a valuable skill that undergraduate students can develop in the classroom. Compassionate students become compassionate leaders who exhibit the stability and psychological safety necessary for a healthy workplace (Worline & Dutton, 2022). Honing compassionate leadership skills means students can be more active and empathetic listeners, more in tune with recognizing the feelings of others, and possess a heightened ability to recommend unique ways of solving problems for the greater good instead of individualistic gain (Martin & Heineberg, 2017). In conclusion, organizations need compassionate leaders who mentor staff with empathy and care—ingredients that grow future leaders and move organizations forward. When students build compassionate leadership skills, they can focus these skills on the needs of others.

Educators, businesses, and community members at the global and local levels have prioritized turning compassion into action. Businesses also want to maximize their profits while cultivating leaders who address global environmental concerns and social inequities (Dyck & Caza, 2022). This viewpoint sets companies apart from competitors who might not follow this global approach. Further, in a recent EY (2023) global U.S. consulting study of over 1,0000 employees, 87% indicated empathy is necessary to create an inclusive community. Social entrepreneurs have also desired to solve problems that address unmet social needs using creative solutions (Honig et al., 2022). Therefore, conversations on turning compassion into action has been central to this recent realignment of corporate priorities and strategies.

In 2022, the United Nations created the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a subsidiary charged with encouraging change and linking countries to information, expertise, and resources to assist people in establishing better lives (United Nations, n.d.-b). The

UNDP is an association of 165 countries and 40 U.N. funds, programs, and agencies and strives to work on the advancement of the 2030 sustainable development goals (SDGs). The United Nations came together in 2015 to develop a 15-year plan establishing 17 SDGs for humans and the planet, measuring progress to 2030. The UNDP's first line of business was to update and redefine the U.N.'s definition of progress and reposition compassion as the focal point of the SDGs (Grant et al., 2022). Several SDGs align with compassionate leadership, including no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, increased peace and justice, and strong institutions (United Nations, n.d.-b). The UNDP stated compassion intentionally comes together to alleviate suffering and nurture human flourishing (Grant et al., 2022). The revised definition of progress, with a heightened focus on compassion, is central to the purpose of the SDGs. The new definition is a reference tool that can help organizations recognize how to convert compassion into action by using the SDGs in response to solving world issues.

Not only do business schools align their curriculum and framework with strategies to address global societal and environmental issues, but leading higher education accrediting bodies also position themselves with these changes. The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, n.d. -a) is a global nonprofit providing accreditation to the world's business schools. The AACSB (n.d. -b) aligned its standards to the U.N.'s 17 SDGs as a strategy to rebuild global business education that keeps societal impacts at the center. In 2020, the association updated the standards, encouraging business schools to reenvision their education models, moving positive and global social impact to the forefront of curricula (AACSB, 2023). The association established curricular guidance that encourages and nurtures innovation, experiential learning, and a learning mindset that endures a lifetime. To do so, they formed the

AACSB accelerators advisory committees, comprising leaders from corporations, social enterprises, nonprofit organizations, and governments (AACSB, n.d. -b). One AACSB advisory committee convened to create a list of societal impact leadership competencies not currently under business education and organizational development curricula (AACSB, 2022). As part of their work, the committee first organized over 50 societal impact leadership competencies into three themes (i.e., head, heart, and hand) as these categories include holistic combinations of the knowledge, emotions, and actions needed for transformational changes. The advisory committee then discovered three leadership competencies: paradox, depolarization, and compassion. They further defined compassionate leaders as impactful communicators who participate in active listening, form relationships, and facilitate inclusive discussions. As accrediting bodies continue to stress the importance of aligning curriculum and business programs with global societal and environmental issues, faculty need to include this material in their curricula, and higher education institutions will continue to play a pivotal role in preparing students for careers in a changing global labor market.

One way to contribute to the next generation of global leaders is by providing students with the tools necessary to make more empathetic choices, which is achieved when compassionate leadership components are woven intentionally into business leadership curriculum (Balwant, 2016; Page et al., 2019). Business scholars have proposed that current business curricula be updated in response to a changing society. Researchers have debated that scientific theories in economics and finance prevent business students from thinking critically, and encouraged the inclusion of more positive and significant perspectives and compassion in course design by adding empathy-infused topics in classroom discussions (Holt, 2020; Lavine et al., 2022; Worline & Dutton, 2022). When exposed to compassion-related experiences (e.g., volunteering, experiential learning, diversity seminars), students develop life and workplace skills such as integrity, empathy, accountability, and dignity (Callister & Plante, 2017; Ramachandran et al., 2023). In a 2021 survey of 65 private and public organizations, employers ranked leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills as essential skills they evaluate during hiring processes (Briones et al., 2021). In another survey of over 50 organizations in New England, employers considered interpersonal skills, listening, and communication as critical skills employees need to succeed in the workplace (Baird & Parayitam, 2019). Hiring managers believe that recent college graduates who are compassionate and have high emotional intelligence (EI) levels will be successful in their positions (Finley, 2021). For example, Routon and Walker (2017) discovered when college students participate in community service experiences, it impacts their philanthropic tendencies and increases lifelong giving to charities. Thus, business courses that have been revised in response to a changing world, where students can develop interpersonal and EI skills through applied experiences, may prepare students to be future compassionate leaders. A deeper investigation into the development of compassionate leadership skills in undergraduate business leadership courses by the researcher could provide ways to enhance the business curriculum to include compassionate concepts as foundational.

Problem Statement

Researchers have expressed concerns with the existing framework of undergraduate business education and its effect on students and their future leadership styles (Aksoy et al., 2019; Friedman & Gerstein, 2017; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Aksoy et al. (2019) argued business schools are not fulfilling their abilities to help future leaders develop the skills required to manage corporate performance and solve social and environmental concerns. A 2020 global study of over 800 human resource (HR) managers highlighted that hiring for soft skills (e.g., teamwork, communication, self-awareness) increased by 86% in the prior 5–10 years (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Succi and Canovi's (2020) study also revealed 60% of HR managers were not satisfied with graduates' flexibility around change and cultural adaptability. Friedman and Gerstein (2017) found business curricula were misaligned with societal changes and could be revised to support soft skills development. Worline and Dutton (2022) advised undergraduate management educators to provide more opportunities for business students to develop soft skills, such as compassion, in classrooms. Though the teaching of compassion might be new to educators, they recognize students need opportunities to develop soft skills but find it challenging to incorporate or maintain consistency at the course level (Morin & Willox, 2022). Ferreira et al. (2022) discovered students' soft skills development, such as communication etiquette and teamwork, declined due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Their research supported the argument that it would be helpful for students to develop these essential skills in their undergraduate courses as they prepare for the labor market.

Furthermore, business scholars have exhibited growing concerns about the elevated levels of social dominance orientation (SDO) in undergraduate business programs (Martin et al., 2015). Like offering a misaligned and outdated curriculum that lacks soft skills development, a curriculum oriented around social dominance does not keep pace with changing societal needs. SDO is an aggressive and hierarchical perspective where an individual assigns another individual to lower or higher social levels. Research has shown individuals with higher SDO may have lower levels of compassion and positive leadership (Martin & Heineberg, 2017; Martin et al., 2015; Metin-Orta, 2021; Zhai et al., 2021). In addition, individuals with higher SDO may have an elevated fear of compassion, negatively affecting their interpersonal skills—behaviors that proliferate and are often modeled by leadership throughout the organization (Martin &

Heineberg, 2017). As a result of the identification of the developing apprehensions about the high levels of SDO in undergraduate programs, business scholars are now researching the influence of compassion and self-compassion on students' leadership skills development.

Conversely, a significant and positive relationship exists between compassion for others and positive leadership. When individuals possess higher levels of compassion, they are more likely to be compassionate to themselves and others, more likely to be open to receiving compassion from others, and less likely to exhibit socially dominant personality traits (Martin & Bok, 2015; Martin et al., 2015). Unlike leaders who follow SDO leadership models, compassionate leaders enjoy helping, developing, and mentoring others by passing on knowledge and wisdom (Martin & Bok, 2015; Martin et al., 2015). Transitioning from SDO-centered curricular content to a more empathetic-focused curriculum would positively influence business school learning outcomes and students' preparedness for the workplace.

Corporate leaders concur that compassionate leadership can be taught in business schools. In a 2022 survey of executives, Tramuto and Corwin (2022) found 95% of senior leaders and 80% of employees agreed that compassionate leadership could be taught. Paakkanen et al. (2021) discovered managers learned to become more compassionate by developing and exercising emotional skills by participating in an 8-week training. Shuck et al. (2019) believed organizations have a special place for compassion and that leaders and their teams can hone emotional skills, resulting in increased creativity and productivity. Since the early 2000s, business schools have included global social and environmental issues in their curricula to remain competitive due to rankings established by the Positive Impact Rating (PIR), an independent organization representing international business schools, think tanks, and nonprofit organizations (PIR, 2022). The PIR aligns with the U.N.'s 17 SDGs, ranking business schools in seven categories: governance, culture, programs, learning methods, student support, institutions as role models, and public engagement. The business schools at Colorado State University, Fairleigh Dickenson University, Fordham University, the University of Vermont, and the University of Colorado Boulder have continued to receive high ratings based on the PIR's seven categories. For example, societal impact is the strategic focus of the University of Vermont's Grossman School of Business, and its mission is infused through the curriculum, programs, learning goals, experiential learning, and competencies. Boston University's Questrom School of Business increased student enrollment in its social impact Master of Business Administration (MBA) program from 79 students in 2011 to 155 students in 2021 (Reilly, 2021). In addition, Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management offered 38 courses on social impact in response to student feedback. These pioneering programs are models for other business schools to consider when revising their programs to include empathy at the core of their curricular learning goals, leading students to be better prepared to face society's ever-changing issues and sustainability challenges.

Business curricula can be revised to evolve with societal changes, and compassionate leadership teaching practices are a growing area among undergraduate business programs. Friedman and Gerstein (2017) stated, "Compassion is contagious (as is bullying) and is needed when dealing with customers, clients, colleagues, employees, and society" (p. 171). This importance, coupled with the increasing attention to social responsibility in the corporate setting, has highlighted the opportunity for undergraduate business programs to evaluate their current business leadership curriculum to ensure the evolving topics are woven into the core learning outcomes.

Purpose Statement

This qualitative case study sought to understand what, if any, elements of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The researcher explored the current model of undergraduate business leadership education and its effect on students and their future leadership styles, which revealed a need to further study what specific components of business leadership curricula help students develop compassionate leadership skills. The investigation was grounded in J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) theory of EI and Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) definition of compassionate leadership.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills?

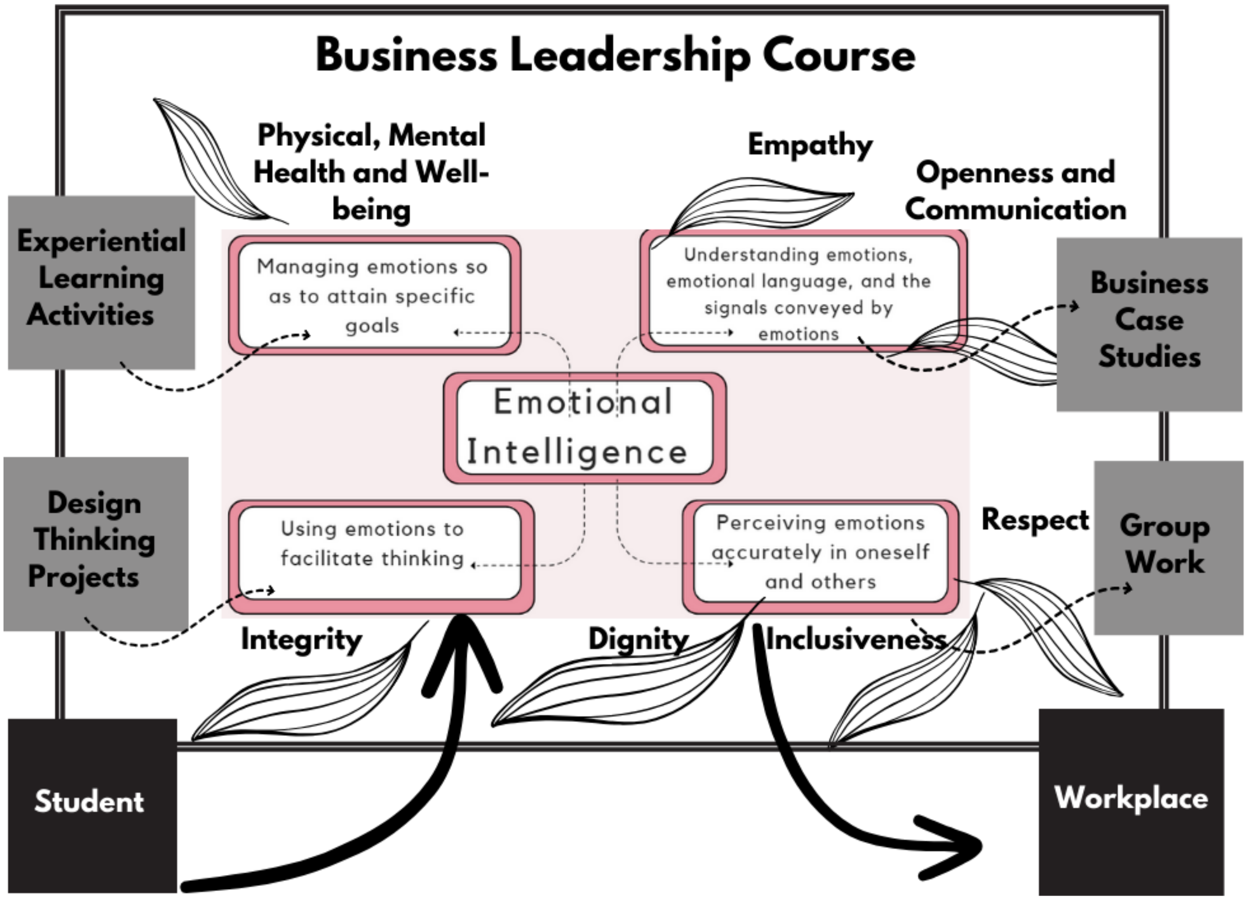
Conceptual Framework

Managers can use EI skills and a compassionate leadership approach to make sound business decisions because the skills rely on solving business problems from a compassionate lens (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; TramutoPorter Foundation, 2021). EI is the ability to manage intricate information relating to one's own emotions and the emotions of others and to be further capable of using this knowledge as a compass for reasoning and actions (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) provided a model to help understand the application of EI explained in four areas, or what the authors call branches, related to (a) how an individual manages emotions to attain specific goals; (b) how an individual understands emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions; (c) how an individual uses emotions to facilitate thinking; and (d) how an individual perceives emotions accurately in oneself and others. Developing students' empathy through their course of study offers them a higher probability of entering the workplace as more compassionate colleagues and supervisors (TramutoPorter Foundation, 2021).

For this study, a compassionate leader refers to an individual who exhibits traits and manners such as empathetic concern, altruism, sagacity, reliability, understanding, responsibility, truthfulness, charisma, pride, self-care, and self-growth in response to helping others reach their goals and personal advancement. This definition was derived from Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) meta-analysis of concepts on compassionate leadership conducted between 2002 and 2021 of over 40 articles. J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) definition of EI and the four-branch model link with the six significant elements of compassionate leadership identified in Ramachandran et al.'s meta-analysis as a foundation for the research question, forming the study's conceptual framework. See Figure 1 for a model of this intersection.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model: Compassionate Leadership Skill Development


Business Leadership Course
Physical, Mental Health and Well-being
Empathy
Openness and Communication
Experiential Learning Activities
Managing emotions so as to attain specific goals
Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions
Business Case Studies
Emotional Intelligence
Design Thinking Projects
Using emotions to facilitate thinking
Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others
Respect
Group Work
Integrity
Dignity
Inclusiveness
Student
Workplace

Note. Adapted from *What is Emotional Intelligence?* (pp. 3–34), by J. D. Mayer and P. Salovey, in P. Salovey and D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications*, 1997, Basic Books. Copyright 1997 by Basic Books. Adapted with permission (see Appendix A).

Undergraduate business programs can evaluate their existing leadership curriculum to ensure evolving topics are woven into core learning outcomes. The top-left box in Figure 1 depicts key skills students can learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities such as volunteering, charitable giving exercises, and diversity seminars. Participating in community service boosts empathy and compassion. The top-right box in Figure 1 illustrates how students can learn to understand emotions and their signals by building openness and communication skills and empathy through problem-based learning activities such as case study analysis or simulation-based learning assessments. Case studies are embedded in the curriculum to offer students exposure to varied viewpoints and diverse opinions. The bottom-right box in Figure 1 exhibits how students can learn essential interpersonal skills they will use in the workplace through group work by understanding how to perceive their emotions and the emotions of others accurately. These techniques and skills prepare students for responding to the needs of others in professional settings. The bottom-left box in Figure 1 shows how, through design thinking projects, such as compassion training, the learning of peer coaching techniques, active listening skills, and by taking emotional and social competence and intercultural competence assessments, students use their emotions to facilitate thinking. These techniques and skills help students build their EI levels so they are equipped to respond to the needs of others. The conceptual framework helped to understand what elements of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills and provided the researcher with a blueprint to assess business leadership curricula and identify compassionate leadership components.

Significance Statement

The findings from this study will inform business leadership teaching practices and will also advise educational leaders on future curriculum reform. From this qualitative case study, faculty may benefit from this research by gaining strategies and knowledge on incorporating elements of compassionate leadership into their curricula.. Integrating compassionate leadership components into business curriculum may also help increase business students’ compassion and empathy levels in business leadership courses. College administration and senior leaders involved in curriculum reform may also learn from the study findings. Finally, the scholarly community and organizations might find this research helpful; as a result, partnerships could be established between organizations and higher education institutions.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative case study design allows researchers to build an investigative case based on qualitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). When researchers conduct qualitative research, they examine the world in its current state and offer detailed descriptions of their reflections (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). As a nonparticipant observer during classroom observations, the researcher took care not to interfere with the course, instructor, or students nor share the observations with the participants; instead, the researcher recorded their feelings, impressions, and perceptions in reflective notes (Unluer, 2012). When qualitative researchers engross themselves in a natural setting, they can look for solutions and apply explanations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012).

Qualitative researchers also find the meaning of others’ experiences through interpersonal involvement, detailed discussions, and complex explanations (Billups, 2021). When researchers collect qualitative data, they position themselves in the center of the study and decipher the research topic in a natural environment by gathering data from multiple sources (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). During individual interviews, the researcher’s role was to use EI skills by listening to and understanding the faculty and student participants’ points of view. Using EI skills allowed the researcher to connect with participants and helped to understand their perspectives (Collins & Cooper, 2014). In this role, the researcher standardized the interview process for all participants as a technique to allow for self-reflexivity (Yoon & Uliassi, 2022).

A researcher addresses their reflexivity, or how their role in a qualitative study and personal upbringing, culture, and experiences influence their interpretations of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To gather an image from all perspectives during the data collection phase, the researcher confronted personal biases and continued to conduct this audit throughout the study. The researcher included reflexive comments such as clarifying biases, values, and experiences that they carried to the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Unluer, 2012). Techniques such as collecting data from multiple sources and reflective journaling assisted the researcher in overcoming biases about the research data (Unluer, 2012). When researchers conduct self-reflexivity throughout each phase of the study, they deepen the findings (Yoon & Uliassi, 2022).

Positionality Statement

It is important to know how an individual's perspective influences their research approach. I followed a postpositivist framework because people who follow this framework gravitate to quantitative research, and I have had previous experience with this type of study. I am enthusiastic about teaching, learning, research, and analysis. I care about topics in higher education because I want to contribute to a discipline where I impact students and their learning positively, as well as the skills and competencies they take with them as they enter a professional field. I hold students, the profession of teaching, and higher education in a positive light and deeply respect their mission and purpose. My presumptions and beliefs are based on my experience as an adjunct professor at public and private institutions. I taught undergraduate and graduate students at several colleges and universities for 10 years prior to this study, teaching economics, public budgeting, managerial statistics, and marketing and business analytics courses. My beliefs were built upon my experience teaching economics and business statistics courses to diverse students with vast backgrounds, skillsets, and experiences.

My assumptions were also based on a previous career experience as a budget analyst for the system office at the University of Massachusetts and budget/policy analyst and director of compliance at the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. During this time, I was exposed to a state public higher education institution's financial operation, budget processes, and administration. As a researcher, I was naturally drawn to quantitative research methods because I have a strong background in quantitative analytics and statistics. However, as an individual, I was attracted to qualitative research methods because I enjoy talking with people and appreciate digging into problems through dialogues, conversations, and observations. Before this study, I did not have qualitative research experience; however, after conducting the study, I realized that I enjoyed conducting interviews with the students and business faculty, and gained new qualitative research skills.

As a researcher, I identified how my positionality related to the study topic, setting, and goals. As a business professor, I knew the undergraduate and graduate business curriculum and classroom environments. In addition, I was informed of the current teaching methods and frameworks business faculty used and I was curious to explore if faculty incorporated compassionate leadership in their teaching. I was deeply interested in contributing to undergraduate and graduate business curricula and frameworks research. This profound curiosity motivated my research. My reasons, goals, interests, assumptions, biases, theories, and beliefs became more specific and solid as the research project expanded. Most importantly, I appreciated exploring qualitative case study methods research.

Key Terms

The definition of terms section helps readers understand the purpose of the study and research question, including terms that might be external to the reader's field of study and are not in common knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For the current study, the key terms included compassion, intercultural competence, and SDO.

The operational definition of *compassion* is included in this section because compassion is in the heart of this study, and it is emotionally intelligent behavior that compassionate leaders exhibit when leading effectively (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). The definition follows the five elements that Strauss et al. (2016) established: (a) identify suffering, (b) recognize the pervasiveness of human suffering, (c) sympathize with the person suffering, (d) accept unpleasant emotions, and (e) exhibit enthusiasm to respond to and mitigate suffering.

Intercultural competence is communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Deardorff, 2008). The researcher included intercultural competence in the key terms section because, as students' interests in global business increase, business educators will continue to look for methods to prepare business students for intercultural interactions, and intercultural communication skills can prepare students for future global business experiences (Draper-Clarke, 2020; Fall et al., 2013; Ramsey et al., 2014).

Social dominance orientation (SDO) is a competitive and classified perspective and belief system where an individual assigns another individual to lower or higher social levels (Martin et al., 2015). Researchers have discovered a relationship between individuals with higher SDO and lower levels of compassion and positive leadership (Martin & Heineberg, 2017; Martin et al., 2015; Metin-Orta, 2021; Zhai et al., 2021). SDO is included in this section because it is important to discuss the adverse effects associated with SDO on business curriculum. There is a need for additional work involving the inclusion of compassionate leadership principles in business curricula, and obsolete business course topics can be replaced with modern frameworks (Grant et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Chapter 1 started with a discussion of the purpose of this qualitative case study, which was to understand what components of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The investigation was grounded in J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) theory of EI and the definition of compassionate leadership developed by Ramachandran et al. (2023). The forthcoming literature review strengthened the basis for the conceptual model. This exploration helped to address a gap in the literature and gave the researcher an opportunity to explore what components of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership. By identifying the problem, the researcher strengthened the study's focus, which strove to find solutions to the research question. The significance of the study highlighted the subject matter's timeliness because its function was to contribute to existing literature. This research could help faculty who teach business leadership courses to inform future practices.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation includes a literature review on the history of U.S. business' effects on the undergraduate business curriculum, and SDO and the double-bottom-line approaches and their effect on business curriculum, including a conversation about the need for additional work regarding the inclusion of compassionate leadership principles in business curricula. It also includes a review of J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI, which was adopted for this study, and discusses how it can help guide business faculty in reviewing components of compassionate leadership in business leadership courses. It also includes a review of the Ramachandran et al. (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership, which was adapted as the conceptual framework for the study, including a conceptual model of the blending of the J. D. Mayer and Salovey four-branch model of EI with the Ramachandran et al. definition. The literature review also includes the benefits of exercising compassionate leadership in the workforce by providing examples of compassionate leadership's impact on employee well-being and job performance, involvement in fostering a more ethical work environment, its assistance in the cultivation of continuous compassionate leadership development through HR policy development, and its impact on corporate social responsibility. An overview of examples is provided of how business educators can include compassionate leadership components in the curriculum by aligning business curricula with the U.N. SDGs. Business faculty create opportunities for business students to develop compassionate leadership skills when they participate in (a) charitable giving activities in business courses, (b) providing business students with experiences that can advance their compassionate leadership skills and foster self-awareness and career efficacy by engaging in service-learning experiences in business courses, and (c) offering compassion training and intercultural communication development for students.

Chapter 3 describes the study's methodology and philosophical foundations, data collection, and data analysis, which includes ethical considerations and limitations of the research. Chapter 4 highlights the study's findings and recommendations for future research. Chapter 5 includes an in-depth discussion of the interpretation of the study's results, and provides an analysis and synthesis of its findings, as well as the study's limitations. Chapter 6 highlights the study's conclusions and offers recommendations for future research and practice.

In addition, Chapter 6 also provides a comprehensive outline of the researcher’s capstone project and insights on how this research could inform business faculty teaching undergraduate business leadership courses to incorporate compassionate leadership components in curricula.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review examines what elements of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The literature review explores the extent to which business faculty and students believe they possess compassionate leadership skills. Today's college students are civic minded; more specifically, business students want to study business ethics, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and effective leadership in their academic programs (Waples & Brachle, 2020). CSR is an organization's intentional effort to operate ethically and support internal and external stakeholders' social and economic well-being (Waples & Brachle, 2020). In addition to compassionate care, self-compassion, and self-development, CSR and ethics competence prepare students to lead others to reach personal and organizational growth compassionately (Ramachandran et al., 2023). Students care about these topics and pursue employment with corporations who have similar or aligned interests. A 2021 survey by Washington State University's Carson College of Business revealed that 70% of employees between the ages of 18 and 26 wanted to work for an organization whose values were similar to their own, and 83% of those individuals wanted to work for an organization with a positive social impact (Washington State University, 2021). Although there is a growing interest in including compassionate leadership development and sustainable and ethical business practices in undergraduate business curricula, business school curriculum remains outdated, lacking alignment with the needs of the 21st-century workforce and the wants of the modern college student (Martin & Heineberg, 2017; Waples & Brachle, 2020).

Students in business leadership courses can learn techniques and skills such as compassionate coaching and self-compassion methods in the classroom that can be transferable to the workplace. Some organizations believe in developing senior leadership because they recognize its value to the whole organization. One way to develop senior leadership is through compassionate coaching. Boyatzis, Smith, and Beveridge (2013) discovered that when managers adopt compassionate coaching at the midlevel of an organization, it is more likely to be distributed throughout the other levels of the organization, ultimately being adopted by its leaders. When leaders are coached on self-compassion techniques, these techniques impact the leader's achievements positively, and compassion is dispersed throughout the organization, creating collective compassion (Wasylyshyn & Masterpasqua, 2018). Business leadership faculty can provide students with opportunities to learn compassionate coaching skills. When leaders and future leaders hone their self-compassion skills, it fosters collective compassion throughout the organization. Faculty teaching leadership courses could offer students opportunities to build these self-compassion and compassionate coaching skills in the classroom through curriculum and self-directed learning by providing students with role-playing, compassionate coaching plans, and written reflection assignments.

Through applied organizational examples discussed in class, students can learn to recognize the importance of compassion in a professional setting and how its presence is more apt to be distributed throughout the organization through various channels. Dutton et al. (2014) suggested organizations implement human resource (HR) policies and programs that embody empathy to increase the presence of compassion in the workplace. Professors can provide real-world examples from the business world for their students. For example, they can discuss when HR managers foster a compassionate organizational climate that directly supports employee development, motivation, and retention (Pirsoul et al., 2023). Students can also learn about the positive effect of self-compassion training programs on employees' stress levels, mental health states, and self-compassion levels (Andersson et al., 2022). Students can understand the importance of compassion in organizations by receiving applied organizational examples in class and through readings, assessments, and activities. These examples teach students how compassion can be propelled throughout the organization through policies and programs.

Through training, assessments, and course discussions, students in business leadership courses can learn how individuals display their emotional intelligence (EI) by interacting with others socially and emotionally (Van Oosten et al., 2019). Students can also learn how leaders rely on this intelligence when leading organizations. When students develop EI skills in their business leadership courses, they build their social and emotional skills in preparation to lead effectively. An individual's ability to empathize with coworkers can be such a powerful indicator of performance that many organizations calculate and measure EI. Students taking business leadership courses can have a jumpstart on developing these skills before entering the workforce. Undergraduate business students can hone these EI skills during their business leadership courses by participating in EI training and assessment activities. Development programs involving emotional and social competence training and executive coaching have proven effective in organizational settings and can be transferred to classroom settings. For example, when employees in a financial setting completed an EI skills training and took a pre- and post-emotional and social competence assessment, the developmental program affected the leaders' performance and work engagement positively (Van Oosten et al., 2019). Business leadership faculty can provide students with similar EI training and assessments that employers offer during their courses as an opportunity to develop their EI skills. Employers emphasize high levels of EI through compassionate leadership, often manifesting itself through action, such as CSR programs and policies.

CSR programs and policies influence employees' well-being significantly and positively (Guzzo et al., 2022). In addition, employees' compassion and gratitude levels are also impacted by the organization's commitment to responsible citizenship, such as a focus on environmental and human rights. As a result, the elevated compassion levels help the organization and its members connect to its mission and core values (Guzzo et al., 2022). College students seek business courses infused with CSR, and new graduates are drawn to organizations that uphold a public commitment to CSR because CSR aptitudes prepare students to lead others to attain personal and organizational development compassionately (Ramachandran et al., 2023; Waples & Brachle, 2020). When a CSR philosophy fosters an organization's environment, the philosophy directly and positively impacts employee well-being and fuels compassion. It could benefit students to learn about CSR because compassion is at the center of its function, preparing them to become compassionate leaders. Business faculty can embed CSR components into business leadership courses, helping students consider their future impact as they enter the workplace.

This literature review begins with a history of U.S. business' impacts on the undergraduate management curriculum and discusses social dominance orientation (SDO) and its effects on business pedagogy. EI and compassionate leadership are intertwined to form the foundational theory for this qualitative inquiry. In addition, the discussion involves compassionate teaching methods and the presence of compassionate leadership in the workforce and in business curriculum research.

History of U.S. Business

U.S. businesses and business education were founded upon the principles of capitalism (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). In the year 1776, Smith, the Scottish economist who founded capitalism, appreciated the significance of compassion, believing capitalism could not exist without compassion and regulation (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). At the time of the founding of the United States, the founding fathers were reading Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. James Madison and Thomas Jefferson identified with Smith's view of virtue, the individual's influence on society, and moral character, and considered these components as founding principles for the new nation (Fleischacker, 2002). Smith's definition of capitalism was built upon integrity and virtue, had the power to defend against greedy human desires, and relied on morality for economic expansion (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). U.S. business, which embodies capitalism without compassion, does not reflect Smith's early views or operate based on his early beliefs. U.S. business, framed by capitalism, is missing some of Smith's original components, such as regulation, morality, and integrity.

In addition to the philosophical contributions, Smith established classical economic theories, such as laissez-faire or free markets, where firms are free to regulate supply, demand, competition, international trade, gross domestic product (GDP), assembly line production, and consumer welfare (Shreve, n.d.). U.S. manufacturers adopted Smith's division of labor methods during the Industrial Revolution, and Smith's economic growth measurement predicted the U.S. stock market crash in 1929 (Rollert, 2018). In 1929, overproduction caused increases in supply in markets and excess debt; as a result, the U.S. economic growth declined by 37%. In addition, the unemployment rate increased to 25%, contributing to the Great Depression, which spanned from 1929 through 1941 (Temin, 1994). However, in 1945, after the end of World War II, the U.S. economy grew. During the second half of the 20th century, the economy had extensive gains due to recovery from the war, increased access to education, savings and investment, technological developments, and trade between global capital markets (Bayoumi, 1995). Fueled by capitalism and free markets, economic growth yielded expansion and production; however, compassion was still absent in these economic measures and business practices (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017).

About 200 years after Smith wrote *Wealth of Nations*, former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, described capitalism as a nonfunctioning free enterprise founded on gluttony and unregulated markets (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). This sentiment applied to the Great Recession, which spanned from 2007 to 2009 in the United States due to the bursting of the housing market, excess consumer consumption of mortgage-backed securities industries, and record-low interest rates. U.S. citizens continued to have access to training and education programs, contributed to their savings accounts, invested in global markets, and impacted technology development. The peak GDP percentage loss for that period was -4%, and the peak unemployment rate was 5% (Shambaugh & Strain, 2021). In response, the U.S. government enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, 2009), stimulating the country's economy by investing $787 billion in financial institutions and corporations (Crucini & Vu, 2020). Government interventions, such as the ARRA (2009) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES, 2020), are examples of a market that did not follow a laissez-faire approach, which is another contradiction to Smith's principles of capitalism. Along with the desire of the nation's top earners to continue to earn profits on their dividends, these government interventions embody capitalism with the absence of compassion. The absence of compassion, government interventions in the U.S. financial markets, and the desire to accumulate excess wealth undermine Smith's founding principles.

Smith's principles for the calculation of GDP and processes for assembly line production have been used during historical economic cycles since the nation's inception. However, Smith's definition of capitalism—based on integrity, morality, virtue, the power to defend against greedy human desires, and economic expansion—is missing from the current U.S. business and economic equation for capitalism (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). There is a timely need to reintroduce the business world to Smith’s notion that capitalism cannot exist without compassion, and one way to do that is to educate future business leaders on these principles by embedding compassionate principles throughout undergraduate business curricula.

The Development of Business Curriculum in Higher Education

The inception of U.S. business education is traced back to 1881, when the first business school in the United States was established at the Wharton School of Finance and Economy at the University of Pennsylvania (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). The school was established by Wharton, a successful businessperson in the mining industry, with a $100,000 donation (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). The University of Chicago debuted a business program in 1898, followed by the University of California, Berkley in 1898, Dartmouth in 1990, and Harvard University in 1908 (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). The early business schools’ curricula focused on banking, finance, insurance, industrial organization, transportation, commercial law, economic resources, economic history, and public service (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). In addition, the Wharton School of Business incorporated liberal arts courses into the curriculum, and Harvard’s graduate business school followed the assumption that their students were rising from Harvard undergraduate liberal arts programs and had a liberal arts priming during their undergraduate education to train as government diplomats (Conn, 2019; Kaplan, 2018). Historically, the 1900s was a time of tremendous growth and contribution for U.S. business schools and business as an occupational choice. Nearly 20% of college graduates entered business careers in the 1900s, and 30% of those graduates attended Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania. Over the next several decades, this momentum continued. During this time, the number of students graduating with business degrees increased from 3% in 1915 to 12% in 1928 (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). Regardless, during the early 1900s, research institutions lacked confidence that business schools were contributing to intellectual thought and academic research, and business faculty looked down on academics in other disciplines for not teaching practical subjects (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983).

By the 1920s, 42 business schools joined the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), which believed that when business professors participated in research, they were more equipped educators (Conn, 2019; Dostaler & Tomberlin, 2013). Business faculty and students conducted research during the summer months and established business school publications (Dostaler & Tomberlin, 2013). At that time, 120 colleges and universities had schools of business, where approximately 400 professors taught students with curriculum, and approximately 23,000 college graduates were entering the private sector (Conn, 2019). Despite the growth in business programs, the academic world still hesitated about studying business as a discipline. Academics questioned the curriculum, concentrating on six areas: accounting, economics, finance, management, marketing, and production. Opponents viewed business schools as catering to the needs of the business world.

In contrast, the business world looked for recent business school graduates who would apply the knowledge and skills learned during their business education in workplace settings (Conn, 2019). After the end of World War II, corporate recruiters hired recent graduates from U.S. business schools (Aaronson, 1992). The corporate world saw the potential of business graduates, whereas higher education did not.

In the 1940s, business schools established business bureaus, which served a dual purpose: to conduct business research and contribute to the institution's scholarly research (Conn, 2019). Business education faculty introduced additional topics in the curriculum, such as business ethics and CSR. After the end of World War II, business school enrollment increased dramatically; it was the most popular major among students, and the discipline no longer faced opposition from faculty from other areas (Cheit, 1985). By 1950, 18% of all Bachelor of Arts degrees awarded were business degrees; by the 1960s, 20% of undergraduate degrees awarded were in business, and over 160 business schools opened on public university campuses (Conn, 2019). By 1970, over 120,000 undergraduate students were graduating with business degrees every year.

During the 1960s, the Carnegie Foundation and Ford Foundation began researching business education, and one of their leading recommendations was combining business education with a liberal arts curriculum (Dostaler & Tomberlin, 2013). The Carnegie Foundation and Ford Foundation severely critiqued the state of theory and research in business administration. Business education during the 1960s focused on accounting, quantitative analysis, economics, finance management, marketing, and production in response to a more advanced labor market and technological advancement. However, the Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation believed a business education with business training and a liberal arts background would provide students with various interests and abilities, preparing them for successful careers in the professional world (Conn, 2019). The Carnegie Foundation and the Ford Foundation were on the right path in emphasizing business education with a liberal arts component, which led to the next phase of business education and involved innovative teaching and research methods.

The Ford Foundation provided grant opportunities to Harvard University, Carnegie Tech, Columbia, Berkley, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to conduct pilot studies that experimented with business curriculum as a strategy to recruit talented students, increase faculty-led research, and decrease the emphasis of vocational training (Conn, 2019; Van Fleet & Wren, 1983). The Ford Foundation worked with the AACSB to market Harvard Business School's case study method, which was the ideal standard in business curriculum. Because it combines business education with a liberal arts approach, which prepares students for real-world business experiences, by the mid-1960s, over 700 AACSB faculty members produced 2,700 business case studies (Conn, 2019).

The interest in business education in a real-world context led to rapid growth in business programs and student enrollments in the 1970s (Conn, 2019). A 140% growth rate in Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs occurred between 1970 and 1978, where the number of graduates in 1978 was 46,650. Enrollment saw another significant increase in the mid-1980s by 42%, yielding 66,500 in 1985 (Cheit, 1985; Conn, 2019). The college students of the 1980s were more socially oriented, and in response, business curriculum introduced public and nonprofit management topics to appeal to this demographic (Conn, 2019). Business schools also began introducing public and nonprofit management topics into the curriculum in response to changing socioeconomic and demographic needs of community-based organizations. For example, MIT's Sloan School of Management viewed its role as helping the intellectual and emotional development of future leaders of organizations in both the private and public sectors (Conn, 2019). The interest in business education in an applied setting and the call to develop intellectual and emotional competencies propelled future leaders to U.S. business schools.

In 2018, there were 13,000 business schools worldwide, and the link between business schools and the business world continued to redefine itself. With the rise in business education programs and management students, there has been an influx of corporate leaders educated in business by pedagogy framed by SDO, which is a competitive nature mindset embedded in traditional business curricula where individuals believe their identified group is superior to other groups (Martin & Bok, 2015). SDO is an outdated curricular model because it emphasizes profit maximization rather than organizational safety and employee well-being (Martin et al., 2015; Neubaum et al., 2009). Higher education has a responsibility to update business curricula in response to changes in societal needs. The following section overviews SDO and its impact on undergraduate business curriculum and organizational dynamics.

A Timely Need to Update Outdated Business Curricula

Business scholars have urged outdated course topics and models to be replaced with current and innovative frameworks so business schools can evolve with changing societal needs (Arce & Gentile, 2015; Neubaum et al., 2009). Earlier critics of business education curricula questioned the ability to educate students responsibly and reflectively, stating business students were more likely to prioritize corporate profit when considering future employers than nonbusiness students who prioritized environmental and social organizations (Neubaum et al., 2009). In addition, business students are said to be more concerned with their benefit than with the welfare of others (Neubaum et al., 2009). Traditional decision-making models, such as SDO, prioritize rationality, efficiency, and self-interest; as a result, the levels of compassion students express to others can decrease (Arce & Gentile, 2015). Employees call for updated HR policies with more compassionate practices, such as to combat long work shifts, scheduling conflicts with personal lives, heavy workloads, staff shortages, job fatigue, and unempathetic leaders (Christiansen et al., 2015; Landers et al., 2020; Salminen-Tuomaala & Seppälä, 2023). More recently, business scholars have called for a reevaluation of curriculum to include more courses on leadership, HR management, and ethics (Amblee et al., 2023). In addition to outdated course topics and models, the skills students need for their future careers can also be reevaluated based on societal needs.

Business faculty and university administrators are interested in the skills that prepare new graduates for successful careers. In a survey, nearly 70 faculty members and administrators from various higher education institutions were asked to provide perspectives on how institutions prepare students to solve social issues (Aksoy et al., 2019). Overall, the survey respondents reported they were not pleased with the social innovation programs at their higher education institutions, indicating they did not perceive their higher education institutions were preparing students for careers in industries that solve social problems. Survey respondents also reported they did not believe their institutions were committed to solving societal issues. Aksoy et al. (2019) also asked participants if they believed their institutions educated students in social enterprise. About 58% of the respondents indicated their institutions offered social business plan competitions, and 81% reported their institutions offered social enterprise start-up skills classes. About 64% of survey respondents indicated their institutions offered students courses in nonprofit management, 58% offered students classes on social innovation, and about 84% indicated their institutions offered social innovation speaker series. Aksoy et al. recommended institutions give students more opportunities to engage, such as partnering with communities to solve real-world problems. They also suggested business faculty provide students with more opportunities during courses to develop through self-reflection, aiding students during self-development and providing them with opportunities to create their definition of leadership. In addition, Aksoy et al. suggested business faculty look to alternative management pedagogies that align with changes in society, technology, and development, inspiring students to think about solving problems in an ever-changing world.

SDO and Its Effects on Business Curriculum

Traditional management pedagogies are framed by SDO and economic system justification (ESJ). U.S. business curricula use SDO and ESJ, where business students are trained to use cost economics to maximize profits (Martin et al., 2015; Neubaum et al., 2009). However, SDO has shortcomings; the competitive nature mindset embedded in traditional business curricula focuses on profit maximization rather than on the safety of the organization's employees (Martin et al., 2015; Neubaum et al., 2009). The outdated frameworks are embedded into the business curriculum, where SDO is an aggressive and classified belief system that attributes individuals to low or high social standings, and ESJ is the subjective measure of how an individual views the current economic system and if there are inequalities (Martin et al., 2015). As a result, self-compassion, fear of self-compassion for self, fear of receiving compassionate behavior, and fear of providing compassionate behavior are all affected negatively. ESJ is an example of an economic mindset used in traditional undergraduate business curricula created to elevate levels of SDO in individuals, where students in power disciplines, such as business and economics, seek professions that emphasize or hold social hierarchies (Martin & Bok, 2015; Martin et al., 2015). Individuals with elevated levels of SDO are less sympathetic than their peers with lower levels of SDO, and male students are more likely to be morally disengaged when compared to female students (Baker et al., 2006). Sinclair and Saklofske (2019) discovered in their quantitative study comparing SDO and compassion levels among male students and female students, that female students were more compassionate and empathetic while male students had higher SDO levels. Similarly, in their study examining SDO and gender, Puckett et al. (2020) found higher SDO levels in male students when compared to female students.

In addition, people with high levels of SDO are less cognizant of corruption occurring in the organization as a result of feeling entitled to exert power over people they view as inferior as a means to uphold their dominant standings in the organization (Rosenblatt, 2012). There is a significant correlation between high SDO levels with low levels of compassion for others and low levels of self-compassion (Martin et al., 2015). Zubielevitch et al. (2022) found that SDO is so powerful that it can influence individuals in finance and business occupations while at the same time can be created by individuals in finance and business occupations. It might be worthwhile for business scholars to continue examining SDO and ESJ's presence in curriculum and consider alternative approaches to prepare to lead with compassion in the future given gaps exist in research from 2015 to the present, in which limited literature for this study could be drawn.

Business scholars call for updating the current business curricula to respond to the evolving world. Holt (2020) argued scientific theories in economics and finance prevent business students from thinking critically. Furthermore, Lavine et al. (2022) urged educators in management to include more positive and significant perspectives and compassion in course design. Worline and Dutton (2022) urged undergraduate business management educators to rethink modern-day curricula because students and educators benefit from adding empathy-infused topics in classroom discussions. Worline and Dutton examined the presence of suffering and compassion in management classrooms. Worline and Dutton proposed business professors incorporate business cases that introduce topics of suffering to emphasize the importance of relational value among humans. The research team posited that professors who teach compassionately and students who learn and act with more compassion collectively transform the business education system. These recommendations support the need to replace curriculum framed by SDO and ESJ with empathy, compassion, and the recognition of human suffering as a means to solve problems in evolving markets in a shifting world.

Outdated course topics and theoretical models embedded in universal business curricula have been a point of contention for university leaders and global executives for decades, and there are concerns from both employers and recent college graduates that students are not learning the skills needed to succeed in the labor market (Qualtrics, 2023). In a 2021 American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) report, 500 executives and hiring managers reported employers' opportunities for improvement in preparing college graduates for labor market entry (Finley, 2021). Half of the executives and hiring managers reported they believed recent college graduates required elevated levels of EI and empathy to be successful in their positions. In another recent survey, college students who recently graduated stated they were also unsatisfied with the level of preparedness for labor market entry, where only 36% of recent college graduates reported they felt very prepared by their education for entry into the job market (Qualtrics, 2023). The recent college graduates reported hesitations about their preparedness in a survey of 5,000 19- and 20-year-old individuals from Australia, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In another study by the Marie Christie Institute (2023), 39% of over 1,000 adults between the ages of 22–28, with at least a bachelor's degree, reported their college did not help them build the skills for the emotional or behavioral effects of the shift from college to the labor market. Adding to the discussion surrounding the unmet needs of recent college graduates, in a 2021 survey, 50% of 1,600 recent graduates reported they did not apply to entry-level jobs because they felt underqualified (Cengage, 2021). About 20% of the recent college graduates reported their college education helped them develop skills they could use on the job; nearly 40% indicated they seldomly used the skills learned during their college education, almost 50% reported their education was not worth the cost, and 33% indicated they secured a job that did not require the skills or knowledge learned during their college education. Both employers and recent college graduates have called for outdated business course topics and theoretical models to be updated with modern frameworks that include the development of empathy and EI skills, which could prepare recent graduates to succeed in professional settings.

Bottom-Line Approaches

One of the traditional business approaches scholars have identified as having imperfections and negative impacts on application is the bottom-line approach, taught to business students and used in corporations. The bottom-line approach, also referred to as the financial bottom-line approach, is the classical view of management, which describes the financial calculation of the final summation of financial statements and guarantees that the financial advantages exceed the financial expenses (Dyck & Caza, 2022). Dyck and Caza (2022) called for updated frameworks to replace traditional frameworks, such as the financial bottom-line approach and the traditional management perspective, where leaders recognize problems or opportunities to enhance the financial bottom line. In business, the financial bottom-line approach is when organizations adopt a bottom-line approach. It can be a problematic, dysfunctional, and undesirable attitude, which depletes managers' mental and emotional states (Rice & Luse, 2022; Rice & Reed, 2022). Bottom-line approaches can create hostile and unethical organizational behavior (Mawritz et al., 2023). When organizations follow a bottom-line approach, employees become more self-interested. Babalola et al. (2020) found employees who follow a bottom-line approach are most concerned about their self-image and, as a result, participate in customer-directed unethical behavior, such as entering a customer contract without the proper terms, to appear more successful (Babalola et al., 2020; Bonner et al., 2017). Bottom-line approaches adopted by organizations cause employees to pursue personal goal-contingent rewards, which may lead to unethical behavior (Bonner et al., 2019). Leaders who follow a bottom-line management approach are less apt to consider the perspectives of their employees or align with positive leadership approaches, such as servant leadership, which is the need to serve others (Babalola et al., 2023; Brouns et al., 2020). In addition, traditional business approaches taught to students and applied in business settings negatively impact the organization and employees on an individual level.

When organizations adopt bottom-line approaches, there can be damaging impacts on both the employees and the overall organization. Given the competitive climate, researchers have also determined a correlation between organizational bottom-line approaches and high rates of insomnia outside of work among employees, which could harm employee work-related behavior, emotions, and performance (Babalola et al., 2022). Eissa et al. (2019) found a correlation between bottom-line approaches and Machiavellianism, a personality trait where individuals are self-focused, cynical, and only concerned with personal goals and success. In their quantitative study, Greenbaum et al. (2021) uncovered that the bottom-line approach prevents organizational leaders from being empathetic, leading to less ethical leadership practices. Rice and Day's (2022) research findings detected that employers who follow a bottom-line approach engage in abusive supervision toward their employees. Greenbaum et al. (2022) also found that when organizations adopt a bottom-line approach, there is a higher likelihood of narcissistic rivalry and social undermining among coworkers. A bottom-line approach can decrease employee creativity and psychological safety, such as expressing oneself freely and discussing difficult topics. The bottom-line approach also contributes to employee turnover among individuals with strong moral identities as a response to unethical behavior among organizational leaders (Mesdaghinia et al., 2019). Employees view their managers who follow a bottom-line approach as ineffective mentors, negatively affecting the employees' performance and harmfully impacting the organization's bottom line (Quade et al., 2020). Business scholars have uncovered flaws in the bottom-line approach, taught to business students and used in corporations. Collectively, this research has suggested an opportunity for faculty to adopt modern business frameworks that yield more promising results for organizational leadership and employee performance.

Tripple-Bottom-Line Approach. Business researchers have also cautioned against faculty educating students on the triple-bottom-line approach, where businesses seek profit-generating opportunities in exchange for solving social and ecological problems (Dyck & Caza, 2022; Kurucz et al., 2014). Using a triple-bottom-line approach, organizations often create a business strategy to sell their products and services by crafting a distortion of the truth. This distortion can lead to companies using charity to promote their products and services (Lock & Araujo, 2020; Srivastava et al., 2022). For example, a company might exercise a triple-bottom-line approach in their CSR strategy by publicizing they support the initiative to create a more sustainable planet, yet not implement policies or programs to operationalize their efforts (Lock & Araujo, 2020). Like the financial-bottom-line approach, business scholars have discovered defects and adverse effects of the triple-bottom-line approach, yielding opportunities for business faculty to seek more modern frameworks to incorporate into business curricula.

Double-Bottom-Line Approach. Organizations have been seeking a more compassionate solution to leadership, and the double-bottom-line approach is one solution leaders can look to for a resolution. There is a current and growing trend for the acceptance and implementation of the double-bottom-line model of an organization's financial statements, which is an emerging model intended to inspire executives to lead compassionately, allowing the organization to measure and report its impact on societal concerns important to the organization (Tramuto & Corwin, 2022). Sometimes referred to as the social return on investment (ROI), the double-bottom-line model is a financial calculation that measures resource accumulation and maximization of social and environmental influence instead of quarterly profit and short-term stock value (Bernardez, 2009). This calculation is captured by adding the mega and macro lines and subtracting the costs. Innovative and revolutionary companies use the double-bottom-line model in their financial statements to incorporate ways to combine financial maximization with a reduction in societal and environmental issues into their organizations' strategies using three levels of data:

1. Megalevel: Benefits of the project for the client, market, and community are specified and measured (Bernardez, 2009). Megalevel results are calculated as benefits for local economics such as employment, profit, productivity, cost savings, market growth, and tax revenue.
2. Microlevel: Define products and services that the company and its competitors produce in the business environment and deliver to clients or end users (Bernardez, 2009). Products and services delivered include research, business plans, and special projects.
3. Macrolevel: Specify how the company will, in exchange, capture a portion of those gains as profits, resulting in a stable profit channel for new ventures (Bernardez, 2009). The macro top line calculates the benefits of providing products and services to the customers and clients and is captured as license, franchise, rent, and copyright revenue. Financial ratios, such as market share, ROI, and return on assets are also included. Most importantly, the double-bottom-line calculation shows the

> organization’s net social result (i.e., mega + macro – cost) and the company’s net expenses. Organizations can use this calculation to measure the social ROI and the traditional ROI to determine breakeven thresholds for the company, clients, and market.

By adopting the double-bottom-line model, organizations stand out compared to their peers who have not adopted a similar approach and appear positive to their employees, the public, and the organization’s shareholders as caring and supportive (Oruh et al., 2021). As a result of the growing interest in social ROI and CSR among organizations and business students, there is an opportunity for faculty to consider the inclusion of the double-bottom-line model in business curriculum as an alternative financial modeling tool. For example, Paxton (2021) allowed students to evaluate an organization’s relevance, impact, sustainability, and excellence by inputting the organization’s data into a social value investing impact model.

If existing business education models shift from a financial perspective to an organizational purpose, they can be rebuilt with an aspirational framework (Hoffman, 2021). By prioritizing financial perspectives in business curriculum rather than employing an organizational lens, business programs are less likely to allow business students to develop ethical business practices and effective and positive leadership styles. The studies discussed in this section further illustrated the need to examine outdated business course topics and seek alternative, more compassionately driven, modern frameworks. EI theory helps discern the possibilities of these options.

Theories in Combination: EI and Compassionate Leadership

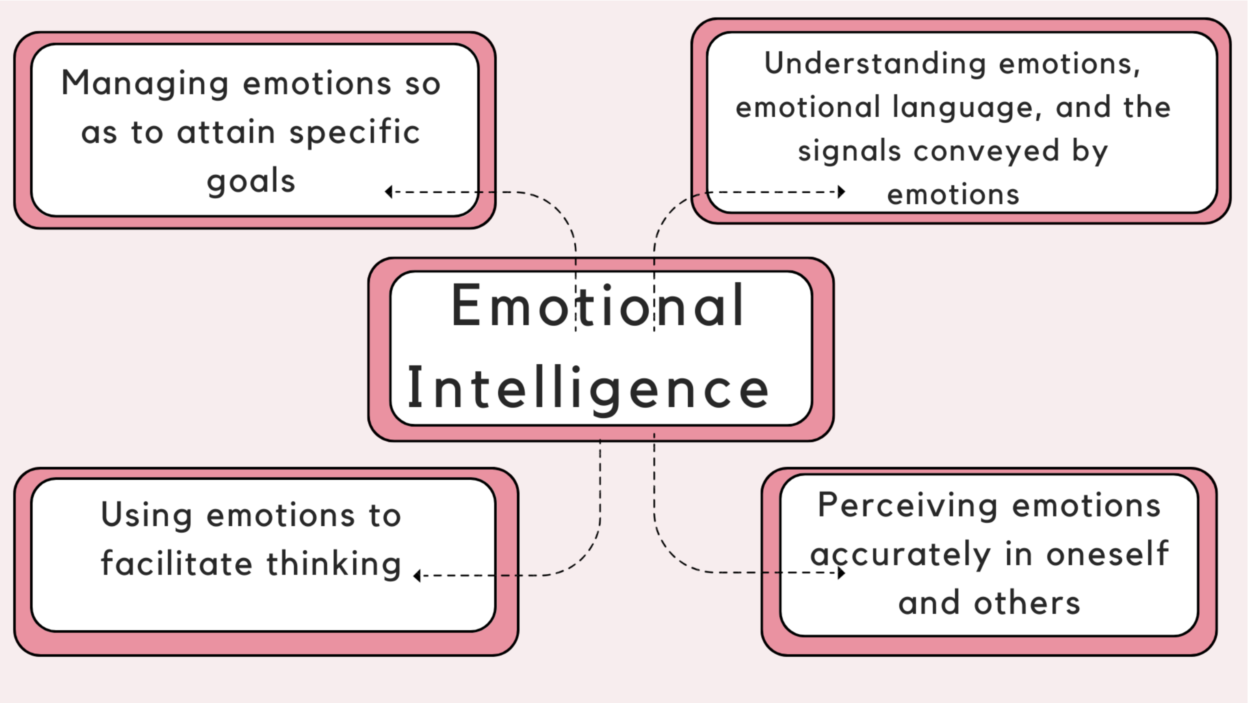
This section discusses the development of EI theory, its complexities, and its relevance to business curriculum and the corporate world. Compassionate leadership is defined, an overview of the concept of compassionate leadership is provided, and its history is covered. Lastly, the intersection of EI and compassionate leadership is shared, where the EI branches are linked with the components of compassionate leadership.

EI Theory

In 1990, Mayer and Salovey theorized that certain individuals could rationalize and use their emotions to enhance their thoughts more efficiently than others; thus, the theory of EI was born (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). In its most basic form, EI is the ability to self-interpret complicated information about an individual's emotions and the emotions of others and convert that information to a resulting action. Since Mayer and Salovey's groundbreaking work, EI has evolved in definition and scope, and research studies on EI have been conducted and applied across industries, including business education (Amdurer et al., 2014; Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013; C. L. Thompson et al., 2020), sales (Boyatzis et al., 2012), and finance (Van Oosten et al., 2019). For this study, EI was defined as the capacity to process complex information about an individual's emotions and the emotions of others and to use this knowledge as a compass for reasoning and actions (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) later offered the four-branch model, a framework to support their definition of EI and a way for scholars and practitioners to understand and evaluate EI in theory and practice (see Figure 2). The four branches include when an individual can adjust emotions to reach goals, understand emotional language and signals, use emotions to help process thoughts, and understand emotions in themselves and others.

Figure 2

The Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Model of Emotional Intelligence


Managing emotions so as to attain specific goals
Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions
Emotional Intelligence
Using emotions to facilitate thinking
Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others

Note. Adapted from *What is Emotional Intelligence?* (pp. 3–34), by J. D. Mayer and P. Salovey, in P. Salovey and D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications*, 1997, Basic Books. Copyright 1997 by Basic Books. Adapted with permission (see Appendix A).

The ability to manage emotions to obtain goals is a key element of EI (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Amdurer et al. (2014) presented an example of social and emotional aptitudes related to professional success. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study of 266 MBA students, examining cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence at graduation and 20 years later. Their findings revealed a positive relationship between emotional and social intelligence, career satisfaction, and success. This study yielded recommendations for students to develop social and emotional aptitudes during graduate business programs and the need for further research on how individuals comprehend professions and professional success related to emotional and social aptitudes.

An individual's ability to recognize feelings, emotional dialogue, and gestures demonstrated by feeling is also associated with high levels of EI (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotionally intelligent individuals recognize emotions, emotional language, and their signals. Empathetic chief executive officers recognize early warning signs and quickly interpret emerging crises (Konig et al., 2020). Leaders learn to recognize emotions when they participate in mindfulness training, are more likely to perceive the exhibited emotions of others, and respond to those in need (Greenbaum et al., 2022). An individual with elevated levels of EI perceives the feelings of others while using their feelings to make informed business decisions.

High EI is also present when an individual applies emotions to their thought process (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). With the assistance of social and emotional competencies, researchers can measure the effect of EI on employee performance. In a recent international meta-analysis of 150 independent samples of over 50,000 participants, Pirsoul et al. (2023) examined the influence of EI on professional outcomes. Researchers found a positive correlation between EI and career adaptability, decision-making, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, salary, commitment, and satisfaction. In addition, there were negative relationships between EI, difficulty making career decisions, and job turnover. People with higher EI moved through jobs at a lower rate and had less trouble making career-related decisions when compared to people with lower EI levels. The lower turnover rate also benefits the organization by ensuring employee retention. Organizations can use social and emotional competencies to help them build

EI skills; these skills help employees think about their emotions and, as a result, positively impact employee satisfaction and employee retention.

An individual's ability to identify the emotions of others and themselves correctly indicates high levels of EI (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). After the 2008 fiscal crisis, business faculty at Case Western Reserve partnered with 370 senior leaders at Fifth Third Bancorp. The executives participated in a development program where EI concepts were built into curriculum, coaching, and action learning projects (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013). The program helped executives develop a more profound self-awareness and strive toward more influential leadership. As a result of the executives completing the program, they learned to create a work environment that was more dynamic and engaging and created opportunities for both the executives and employees to meet personal and professional achievements (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013). The researchers urged scholars to conduct future qualitative studies that further build upon the structure of compassion in organizations, identifying a stronger link between EI and leadership development in educational and organizational environments (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013). C. L. Thompson et al. (2020) examined the influence of EI skill development on MBA students' interpersonal skills over a 1-year period. The research teams implemented pre- and post-tests in the EI skill development program. They found that EI skills development through experiential curricula activities increased MBA students' EI levels, proving the need for universities to prepare students with these skills to stay relevant in a changing business environment. In a more recent study exploring the relationship between interpersonal skills and business education, Fulmore et al. (2023) analyzed pre- and post-EI competency tests of students in business leader courses. Fulmore et al. found the course affected the students' development of EI skills positively, allowing them to develop applicable interpersonal skills they could use in the future workplace. Leaders with high EI levels can recognize their team members’ emotions accurately, allowing them to distribute compassion throughout the organization.

In 2008, Caruso, a research affiliate at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, worked with Mayer and Salovey to develop six additional recommendations for the study and use of EI to dispel confusion and debate among scholars (Foundation for Developing Emotional Intelligence, n.d.). The first was a recommendation for journalists, researchers, and practitioners to use and cite scientific studies regarding EI (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). The second was for the phrase EI to be restricted to aptitudes at the junction of emotions and intelligence and controlled to the collection of reasoning skills of an individual’s use of emotions to understand their feelings. The third recommendation from this research was for people interested in the concept of EI to shift their thoughts on EI as a personality trait to the idea that it is an ability that can be measured scientifically through emotional facial recognition and by using emotional knowledge measures. The fourth invited people interested in EI to learn more about EI instruments, emotional facial recognition capability, degrees of emotional understanding, and self-control. In J. D. Mayer et al.’s (2008) fifth recommendation, the researchers cautioned against personality traits (e.g., desire for success, self-control, happiness) and social types (e.g., confidence) being excluded from the discussion of EI. Lastly, J. D. Mayer et al. encouraged more studies and scholarly contributions to the new and growing field of EI. These recommendations provided context to the discussion of EI and illustrated how the theory could be used as a theoretical framework for this study. The suggestions underscored the need to use scientific studies on EI to frame the research, suggested researchers implement instruments to measure EI, and supported the need for additional work in the field. These recommendations can be followed when examining the components of business leadership curriculum. Continued research in this area can offer solutions to help students and employees develop compassionate leadership skills as a tool to perceive emotions accurately in oneself and others. Researchers can look to the development of the 180-year history of leadership theories to shed some light on the newly developed EI theory and its use by leaders.

Compassionate Leadership Theory

The topic of leadership is one of the most complex and multidimensional phenomena, studied extensively over the years, and continues to generate captivating and complicated debate due to the complexity of the subject. A vast body of literature exists on leadership styles, dating back to 1840 with the great man theory, which focused on great people as leaders, to the early 1930s and 1940s with trait theories, which proposed strong leaders emulate personalities and behaviors (Van Seters & Field, 1990). New theories continued to emerge regularly: influence theories (1950s), behavioral theories (1950s–1960s), situational theories (1960s–1970s), contingency theories (1960s–1970s), antileadership theories (1970s), culture theories (1980s), transactional theories (1970s), transformational theories (1980s–2000s), and more recent developing theories such as inclusive leadership (2010–2019) (H. Thompson & Matkin, 2020; Van Seters & Field, 1990). New organizational leadership styles continue to be added as experts in the field compare approaches. In their meta-analysis of leadership journals from 1990 to 2018, Page et al. (2019) analyzed articles to determine leadership focus, the topics most researched, and how leadership expectations changed. The meta-analysis revealed transformational leadership ranked as the highest standard of leadership and identified its connection with EI due to the relationship between inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders use their power and motivation efficiently and work collaboratively with others to foster confidence. The meta-analysis also identified a new classification of leadership (i.e., compassionate leadership), a style that results from effective leadership behavior, office contentment, organizational dedication, and work commitment. This new classification included the concept of collective, distributive, and adaptive qualities. Leaders in applied professional settings draw from multiple transformative styles where they adapt their styles based on the situation, and members of their organization begin to adopt a similar approach that flows throughout the organization. Historically, transformational leadership was the approach managers aspired to follow until compassionate leadership evolved (Shuck et al., 2019). Compassionate leadership is a valuable leadership style in the corporate world and holds strong connections to EI.

Defining Compassionate Leadership. Compassionate leadership is a newly identified leadership style with a growing body of literature. Dutton et al. (2014) acknowledged that despite corporate leaders' interest in compassionate leadership strategies as a response to an evolving global labor market, there is limited research regarding cultural influence on compassion in work settings. Compassion levels might defer between male participants and female participants. Researchers have also identified differences between compassion levels in males and females. A team of neuroscientists scanned brain images of 12 healthy women and 12 healthy men after showing the participants compassion-evoking photos (Mercadillo et al., 2011). The research team found that the brains of the female participants were activated in the areas of emotions, empathy, and moral processes, while the male brains were restricted in these areas. The researchers suggested that the female and male difference in responses could be the result of differences in evolved neural mechanisms and socially learned nurturing skills. Ramachandran et al. (2023) broadly defined compassionate leadership as "a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth" (p. 55). In their meta-analysis of over 40 articles spanning 20 years (2002–2021), Ramachandran et al. identified six significant elements of compassionate leadership: (a) empathy, (b) openness and communication, (c) mental and physical well-being and health, (d) inclusivity, (e) integrity, and (f) respect and dignity. Leaders create a compassionate environment when they empathize with their employees. For example, a leader shows empathy when they observe an employee having challenges with a job task and inquire how they can assist the employee in completing the task. Compassionate leaders deliver honest and transparent communication throughout the organization, such as providing frequent and transparent updates to their organization regarding protocols and policies. Executives use compassionate leadership skills when implementing corporate policies and programs focusing on employee mental and physical health and well-being, such as establishing safety policies, balancing employee workloads, and providing counseling services. Compassionate leaders consider employees' perspectives and encourage inclusive participation by ensuring transparent and ethical business decisions. By doing so, credibility and trust are built among their employees. In their book on kindness in leadership, Haskins et al. (2018) explained that effective leaders empower others and are emotionally engaged by using their EI skills. Although compassionate leadership is an emerging leadership style, pertinent studies have highlighted its applicability in the classroom and the workplace (Frost, 1999; Kanov et al., 2004).

History of Compassionate Leadership Through Present Day. Frost (1999) first identified the importance of compassion in organizations in a reflective article sharing insights from a personal experience in a health care setting where he was being treated for cancer. Frost observed the nursing staff compassionately caring for patients and was inspired to think about the application of empathy in other organizational settings. In 2004, Frost joined a team of researchers, including Kanov and Dutton, to continue investigating how individuals experience and are impacted by compassion in organizations (Kanov et al., 2004). In this case study, the research team examined examples in corporations to understand how individuals experienced pain and how empathy might be used to help suffering individuals heal. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended companies create opportunities for employees to share their feelings and anxieties regarding work-related projects and personal issues. The research team also found organizational structures (e.g., a collection of gifts and resources for distressed employees, donating vacation and personal days to people in need) allow individuals to respond to others' feelings. The interest in compassion at a high level in organizations led the research team to explore how individuals in organizations process compassion on a personal level.

The impact of Kanov et al.'s (2004) study guided Dutton et al. (2006) to narrow their focus on investigating compassion in organizations by considering how individuals in organizations handle compassion personally. In their grounded theory case study, Dutton et al. (2006) examined how individuals process and organize compassion and how emotion stimulates and organizes responses to human pain in organizations. As a result of their study, Dutton et al. developed a compassion organizing theory and definition. They described compassion organizing as a coordinated response to human pain in organizations, which contains three elements: (a) the stimulation of emotion, (b) the social structure of the organization, and (c) structural and symbolic developing qualities. Their theory identifies five central structures essential for understanding the pattern of compassion organizing: (a) routines and networks allow and restrain resource removal, creation, and organization; (b) resources assist movement and are developed by activity; (c) significant resources include social, cognitive, emotional, and symbolic; (d) evolving characteristics deliver timely, detailed organization and adjustment of resource movement; and (e) through phases of stimulation and movement, the cycle continues until the pain or suffering ends. Dutton et al.'s exploration of compassion organizing paved the way for subsequent studies examining the presence of compassion in organizations.

Following the research on compassionate organizations conducted in the early 2000s, other research teams continued the exploration of compassion in organizations. Lilius et al. (2008) discovered employees feel positive emotions and affective organization commitment when they experience compassion in professional settings, which has a lasting effect on the organization. In their descriptive qualitative study, Rynes et al. (2012) reflected upon how caring and compassionate organizations are created and provided recommendations for ways organizations can cultivate compassion through mindfulness training, dispute resolution and employee support, and hiring and retention programs, and recommended care and compassion components be incorporated into management research and teaching. Neff and Pommier (2013) discussed an example of identifying human emotions, signals, and language in a quantitative study on self-interest and concern for others. The researchers examined the variables of compassion for humanity, empathy, perspective taking, personal distress, altruism, and forgiveness. Participants included over 380 undergraduate students, 400 adults in the community, and over 170 mediators. Elevated levels of self-compassion were connected to concern for humanity, empathy, altruism, increased perspective taking, decreased personal discomfort, and higher levels of forgiveness in the adult and mediator groups. Compassionate and self-compassionate individuals recognize emotions, emotional language, and their signals.

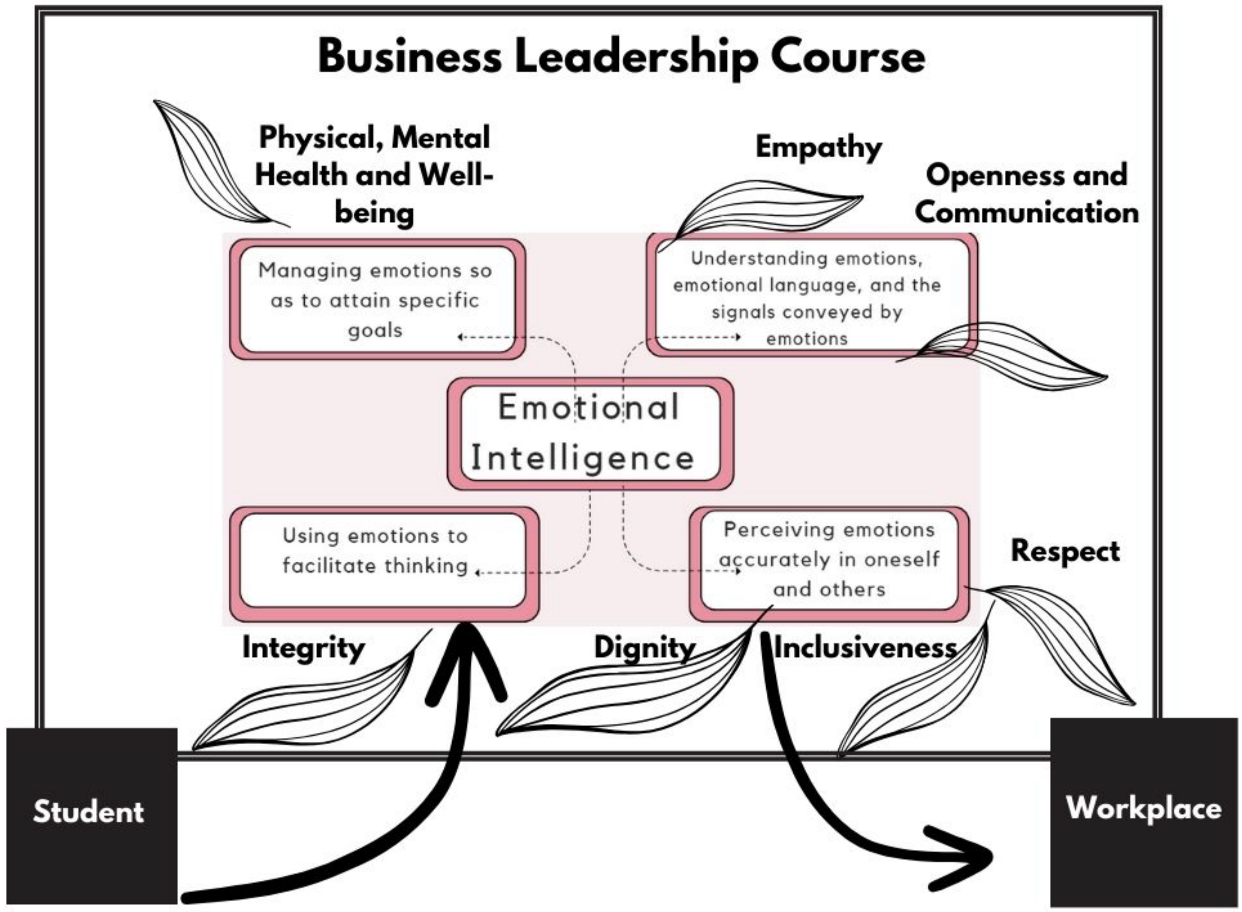
By 2015, business scholars were examining how compassion is created in organizations, its effects on employees, and how executives develop compassionate leadership skills. In their qualitative study, Wei et al. (2016) examined the compassionate leadership actions of executives. As a result of their research, they discovered that compassion has an impact on individual, relational, and organizational performance. In their qualitative study, Banker and Bhal (2018) explored how managers build the idea of compassionate business organizations. After analyzing interview data of middle- and senior-level managers, they identified empathetic leaders are the foundation required for compassionate organizations. They also discovered compassionate leadership creates a compassionate business climate by instilling ethics, morals, virtues, and trust in employees throughout the organization. Their practical recommendations included implementing employee social engagement programs to build employee bonds. Compassionate leaders rely on their EI skills when leading teams ethically and effectively.

Intersection of EI and Compassionate Leadership

Research has suggested that to lead with compassion, leaders should possess high levels of EI (Konig et al., 2020; Oruh et al., 2021). In a qualitative doctoral dissertation, Shiner (2015) examined leadership effectiveness among research and development (R&D) leaders in the biotechnology industry, and explored the connection between mental complexity, which is a characteristic of adult development, and EI. After analyzing data collected from participant interviews, Shiner found mental complexity and EI to work in conjunction to boost leadership effectiveness. The exploration of compassionate leadership highlighted the need for workplace EI skills to execute compassionate leadership effectively. Chief executive officers with elevated levels of EI are more likely to notice cues and trends, are more resourceful in locating pertinent organizational information, build stronger relationships with stakeholders, and are more dedicated to improving the organization’s relational structure (Konig et al., 2020). Compassionate leadership can impact employees’ worries about job insecurities, health concerns, workloads, and compensation positively when leaders incorporate interventions and coping strategies for their employees in their leadership strategy (Oruh et al., 2021). In a literature review by the TramutoPorter Foundation (2021), seven themes of compassionate leadership were identified: community, communication, consistency, cooperation, commitment, courage, and change. These seven themes were used in a nationwide survey to explore how organizations’ leaders can develop compassion (Tramuto & Corwin, 2022). The survey asked five research questions, including the following: Can compassionate leadership be taught? After analyzing 1,500 responses from individuals in various professions and industries, they found nearly 95% of senior leaders and 80% of individuals agreed that compassionate leadership can be taught (Tramuto & Corwin, 2022). Managers use EI skills and compassionate leadership when making sound business decisions (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; TramutoPorter Foundation, 2021). Furthermore, developing students’ empathy through their course of study offers a higher probability of them entering the workplace as more compassionate colleagues and supervisors (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; TramutoPorter Foundation, 2021). J. D. Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) four-branch model of EI and Ramachandran et al.’s (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership formed the study’s theoretical framework (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Theoretical Framework: The Intersection of EI and Compassionate Leadership


Business Leadership Course
Physical, Mental Health and Well-being
Empathy
Openness and Communication
Managing emotions so as to attain specific goals
Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions
Emotional Intelligence
Using emotions to facilitate thinking
Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others
Respect
Integrity
Dignity
Inclusiveness
Student
Workplace

Note. Adapted from *What is Emotional Intelligence?* (pp. 3–34), by J. D. Mayer and P. Salovey, in P. Salovey and D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications*, 1997, Basic Books. Copyright 1997 by Basic Books. Adapted with permission (see Appendix A).

The first EI branch, where an individual manages emotions to reach goals, intersects with the physical health, mental health, and well-being compassionate leadership components (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Compassionate leaders are dedicated to safeguarding, retaining, and reestablishing their employees’ physical and mental health and well-being (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; Ramachandran et al., 2023). Employers contribute to a positive work environment by balancing employee responsibilities, work environment safety precautions, and employee physical and mental health programs (Ramachandran et al., 2023). When employers provide mental health support and coping mechanisms, employees exhibit high levels of emotional connection to the organization, are more engaged, and perform at a higher level (C.-H. Mayer & Oosthuizen, 2020). Emotionally intelligent leaders can foster compassionate connections among team members and assist in managing the emotional and physical challenges they encounter (Christiansen et al., 2015). Emotionally intelligent leaders help their team members reach goals while maintaining a healthy sense of physical and mental health and well-being.

The second EI branch connects with compassionate leadership’s empathy, openness, and communication when an individual identifies emotions, understands emotional language, and observes emotional signals (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Compassionate leaders use their understanding of the emotions of others when leading and when working on a team. When managers lead compassionately, they show empathy, creating a more compassionate work environment (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; Ramachandran et al., 2023). Compassionate leaders use their knowledge of emotional language and their signs when exhibiting honest, empathetic, and open communication with their employees.

The third EI branch connects with the integrity function of compassionate leadership when an individual uses feeling to process thoughts (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Compassionate leaders are dedicated to using their emotions when making ethical and transparent organizational decisions (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; Ramachandran et al., 2023). Compassionate leaders rely on their integrity and the management of emotions during the thought process when making sound decisions for the organization because the manager builds credibility with their employes while the employees also build trust toward the manager (Shuck et al., 2019). Compassionate leaders rely on their integrity and the management of emotions during the thought process when making sound decisions for the organization. Leading with compassion takes a great deal of EI, and the greater the ability to lead compassionately, the more impactful the results on workplace performance (Boyatzis et al., 2012). For example, in their meta-analysis of existing literature, Carragher and Gormley (2017) explored topics on leadership and EI in nursing and midwifery. Based on their findings, the researchers confirmed an association between effective leadership and EI. Their meta-analysis verified that personal characteristics, such as self-awareness, the ability to self-manage, motivation to develop professionally and personally, and integrity are essential for emotionally intelligent leadership to be learned and developed. They recommended programs that support compassionate leadership in the curriculum. Higher education institutions can assist students in developing compassionate leadership skills when curricula are updated with these opportunities for students to develop these personal characteristics.

Lastly, observing feelings in themselves and others communicates dignity, respect, and inclusiveness (J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Compassionate leaders truthfully recognize the emotions of others and identify their own emotions. They build inclusive work environments and increase employee engagement and their sense of equality by valuing and weighing employee input at all levels (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008; Ramachandran et al., 2023; Vogus et al., 2021). In addition, when employees are coached with compassion, they solidify their professional commitment to their organization (Van Oosten et al., 2019). EI positively impacts organizational vision, shared mood, and perceived organizational support; as a result, it has an immediate connection to organizational engagement (Boyatzis et al., 2015).

Compassionate leaders respect and value each member's contribution to the organization, and as a result, the employees exhibit a heightened level of dignity in their work environment (Ramachandran et al., 2023; Shuck et al., 2019). This section discussed the development of EI theory, its intricacies, and its significance to business curriculum and the corporate world. The definition and history of compassionate leadership and the discussion of the intersection of EI and compassionate leadership, and more specifically, the connection to the EI branches and the components of compassionate leadership, are vital elements needed in this exploration of business leader development courses. These components are required to help determine the presence in curriculum because these essential skills will help prepare students for successful careers in the workplace.

Compassionate Leadership in the Workforce

Compassionate leadership has been identified and measured in various contexts and settings, including higher education and multiple organizational sectors. Compassionate leadership positively affects employee well-being and performance by lowering employees' stress levels; decreasing their stress and insecurities around job security fears, health concerns, and workloads; and increasing compensation (Oruh et al., 2021). Oruh et al. (2021) recommended organizations employ compassionate policies that respond to employee insecurities and stresses. There is a link between compassion and ethics in that an individual's compassion increases their ability to lead ethically, and an individual's ethical leadership practices allow them to lead compassionately. As a result, a manager's capacity to lead ethically is significantly and positively related to compassionate leadership (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara &

Viera-Armas, 2019). Research has shown that empathy levels increase when managers participate in varied and ongoing compassionate-based training and development programs (Paakkanen et al., 2021; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Viera-Armas, 2019). When manager participant increases, managers use empathy and ethical leadership practices in response to their employees' emotional and social cues. In turn, employees receive more positive feedback from their supervisors, work in an environment that cultivates growth, and feel more empowered (Paakkanen et al., 2021).

Workplace-sponsored compassionate-based training and development programs are essential; however, compassionate leadership training begins in the classroom (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013). When faculty include elements of compassionate leadership in the curriculum through active learning activities and via case study analysis, students realize how being a more compassionate leader can influence organizational dynamics positively. Emerging leaders will be more apt to apply these practices upon entering the workforce.

Training and Development in Organizations to Cultivate a Compassionate Culture

Business researchers have explored the effects of a manager's compassion on employee well-being and job performance. Oruh et al. (2021) studied the effects of compassionate leadership on employees' stress levels, discovering that compassionate leadership influenced employees' job security fears, health concerns, workloads, and compensation positively. Shuck et al. (2019) published a phenomenological study validating the Compassionate Leader Behavior Index, which measures six compassionate behaviors (i.e., integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, and dignity) that develop during routine and critical events in an organization. Shuck et al. recommended organizations develop training programs that center on listening with empathy, ways to be accustomed to signals that signify when an individual is confronting an emotional concern, and how managers can redraft messages that could be alarming to employees. Simola (2019) also recommended undergraduate business programs provide their students with a course dedicated to managing workplace mental health where students learn about mental health conditions and skills for managing workplace mental health issues. Components involving the response to employee mental health conditions, stress, and insecurities can be incorporated into undergraduate business leadership courses, which will prepare future compassionate leaders.

In addition to ensuring the presence of compassionate leaders and the application of a compassionate organizational framework, organizations can detect structural components that either foster or hinder compassionate business operations. For example, Rider et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative research study to explore the components present in humanistic service delivery by administering a reflective survey to 92 employees. Participants reported receiving humanistic support from their colleagues, mentors, and leaders at the individual level but did not observe humanistic changes such as a shared organizational vision at the organizational level. Rider et al. concluded participants' humanistic values were not aligned with their institution's outdated climate and recommended the employees and the organization adopt a shared positive humanistic vision centered on compassion and well-being. Business leadership faculty can implement course elements such as in-class discussions and case study analysis, focusing on an organizational shared vision and employee well-being that is rooted in humanistic values, in curriculum, helping students build compassionate leadership skills.

Business researchers have also examined the effects of emotional skills training programs on compassion levels. Van Oosten et al. (2019) conducted a study where 85 senior executives from a financial services organization completed a development program involving emotional and social competence training and executive coaching. Participants completed a pre- and post-emotional and social competence assessment. The research team discovered the developmental program affected the leaders' performance and work engagement positively. Paakkanen et al. (2021) analyzed if training programs for emotional skills could impact managers' compassion levels positively by examining if their sense of compassion increased after program participation. Paakkanen et al. discovered that when managers apply their empathy and ethical leadership practices in response to their employees, employees (a) receive more positive feedback from their managers, (b) report that they work in an enriching environment, and (c) report that they feel more invested in their organization. Paakkanen et al. recommended organization leaders invest in compassion training programs to foster compassionate environments. In short, the effects of training and development to foster a compassionate work culture impact employee well-being and job performance.

Policy Development in Organizations to Cultivate Compassionate Culture

Training and development are just one area where organizations can cultivate a culture of compassion. Empathetic leaders are at the core of a compassionate workforce and are essential for mission-driven organizations. However, policy development and HR is another area where organizations can make strides in best practices and positive change. When leaders employ compassionate leadership skills, they support their peers, symbolizing empowerment and transformative approaches (Caddell & Wilde, 2018). A compassionate framework offers individuals in organizations the chance to follow a path to reconstruct and redevelop relationships throughout the institution. Lefebvre et al. (2020) suggested employees are more resilient and effective when organizations adopt a self-compassionate mindset, when their HR policies and programs reflect this mindset, and when they are communicated through leadership styles training. Similarly, Richard (2020) argued that when organizations implement interpersonal management programs and policies where leaders use empathy when helping employees address work-related stressors, the employees become more resilient. Saks (2021) recommended organizations create HR policies that provide care-enhancing interventions as a technique to foster a caring climate between manager and employee, and among coworkers. As a result, these support-enhancing interventions positively affect the support the employees receive at the organizational, managerial, and peer levels. In response to a growing trend in the U.K. health care system, Hewison et al. (2018) examined compassion in organizations by analyzing surveys completed by staff and patients at 10 social and health care organizations. Using thematic analysis, Hewison et al. developed a framework of compassion and separated the framework into action and impact. The action themes included support through distress, role modeling, recognition of staff, kindness, listening and assurance, discretionary effort, and maintaining morale through change. The impact themes included feeling secure, valued, proud, and empowered; directly improving patient care; creating or maintaining a positive culture; and improving emotional resilience. The researchers called for further development and application of the framework in other organizations.

Findings from studies revealed organizations were most successful in delivering HR policies that provided employee care-enhancing interventions if reciprocal relationships exist between the manager and employee; HR policy solutions provided by management helped to combat long work shifts, time constraints, heavy workloads, and staff shortages (Christiansen et al., 2015; Landers et al., 2020; Salminen-Tuomaala & Seppälä, 2023). Organizations can adopt a compassionate framework and compassionate HR policies addressing long work shifts, time constraints, heavy workloads, and staff shortages based on their organizational needs. These HR policy examples are helpful for business students to learn through in-class discussions and written reflections and can be applied to other industries and disciplines as these future leaders consider how their organizations impact humanity.

Compassionate Leadership and CSR. Responsible organizations continually evaluate their social impact and its influence on customers, shareholders, and employees. CSR is an organization's deliberate attempt to manage and foster the social and economic well-being of internal and external stakeholders ethically (Waples & Brachle, 2020). Guzzo et al. (2022) examined the effect of CSR policies and events on employees' perceptions of CSR and their well-being, gratitude, and compassion levels. The research team surveyed 200 undergraduate students enrolled in a hospitality program and 300 individuals working in the hospitality industry. The researchers discovered employees' perceptions of CSR events and policies influenced their well-being significantly and positively, and both compassion and gratitude were influenced by the organization's commitment to responsible citizenship. In addition, the researchers found hospitality employees' and students' well-being positively impacted their perception of CSR when supported by their gratitude and organizational compassion. When a CSR vision supports an organization's environment, it directly and positively impacts employee well-being; as a result, it fuels compassion throughout an organization. Compassionate leaders rely on their EI skills when implementing CSR initiatives effectively, such as creating trust with shareholders, establishing shared objectives, and promoting partnership and communication (Ahsan, 2023). Compassionate leaders also use their empathy as a crucial aptitude when making business decisions to understand the potential impact on stakeholders (Cartabuke et al., 2019). In addition to CSR strategies, business faculty can incorporate other compassion-driven concepts in the curriculum, like programming as a way to cultivate more empathetic leaders.

Compassionate Leadership in Business Curriculum

There are many ways to embed empathy-driven teaching in higher education, including aligning curriculum with U.N. sustainable development goals (SDGs), offering activities involving altruism and charitable giving, embedding experiential service-learning activities into coursework, and exposing students to compassion training. The ongoing rise in academic research on the presence of compassionate leadership in business curriculum has been in response to the changing business and societal landscape (Dutton & Worline, 2020; Lavine et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2020; Tzortzaki, 2022; Worline & Dutton, 2022). Concerned business researchers, Dutton and Worline (2020), were worried that business curriculum did not contain empathy-driven curricula, and counseled business professors to teach business students compassionately, with the goal of students acting with more compassion, collectively transforming the business education system. Adding to the concern for the need for compassion to be included in business curricula, Tzortzaki (2022) explored the need for college students to build compassionate leadership skills to succeed in the post-COVID-19 global pandemic labor market. Results of Tzortzaki's study confirmed when students participated in self-leadership training courses, it had a positive impact on their ability to become a self-leader. Worline and Dutton (2022) later advised undergraduate management educators to add empathy-infused topics in classroom discussions. Lavine et al. (2022) discovered management educators can include compassion in business course design as an opportunity to help students prepare to understand the personal relationships they will build in the workforce, and also recommended management faculty should consider potential positive impact on their future organizations and on the world around them. These findings were in line with Russell et al. (2020), who stated, "To achieve successful business operations, accountants and business managers need to have compassion for colleagues, customers, investors, people in the supply chain, and others" (p. 9). Although compassionate leadership is an evolving topic, how it is cultivated in the next generation of leaders through college curriculum and teaching reform is a growing interest.

A number of scholars in business education have researched the effects of embedding various components of compassion, ethical, and empathetic leadership topics in business courses, yielding positive outcomes (Carragher & Gormley, 2017; Tzortzaki, 2022). Self-compassion has a constructive impact on EI levels, optimism, and initiative; as a result, leaders with more compassion are highly efficient and successful in their professional roles (Tzortzaki, 2022). Students can build personal characteristics, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, enthusiasm to develop personally and professionally, and integrity, which are vital EI behaviors required to lead organizations (Carragher & Gormley, 2017). In their study on leadership and EI in nursing college classrooms, Carragher and Gormley (2017) examined the effects of EI on future health care professionals. They found that when students developed EI skills, they were better prepared to provide continual and high-quality compassionate care. Their results indicated that when compassionate leadership components are incorporated into a curriculum, students can be groomed to thrive in the evolving business world.

Other prominent scholars in business education have studied the impacts of compassionate teaching methods and flexible learning environments on students' development of compassionate leadership skills (Matheson & Sutcliffe, 2017). Matheson and Sutcliffe (2017) examined the required compassionate leadership course to support creativity, develop an internal voice, and increase participation among international graduate business students from data collected from focus groups and student questionnaires. Matheson and Sutcliffe hypothesized that courses can be developed to allow students to develop a sense of belonging because the learning process empowers students. They also suggested trust and belonging can be introduced at the beginning and throughout a course through experiential learning opportunities; students have transformations when they have opportunities to self-reflect. Based on their findings, Matheson and Sutcliffe proposed replacing traditional assignments, such as essays and exams, with creative assignments, such as storytelling and portfolio-based assessments. They suggested faculty incorporate social learning outside the classroom by encouraging students to interact socially with their peers. Flexible learning environments give students the option to be creative, build a sense of empowerment, and feel like they belong.

Compassionate teaching is also a functional model for educators who teach neurodiverse student populations (Hamilton & Petty, 2023). In an applied educational setting, instructors can recognize student suffering and take action to relieve it; for example, instructors can help students draw from their strengths to grow their capabilities and incorporate elements of universal design for learning to expand flexibility for students in both accessing course material and in the demonstration of their learning. Pedagogy and research that incorporate compassion can promote the future of post-COVID-19 global pandemic higher education (Andrew et al., 2023). Faculty members can consider implementing compassionate pass and withdrawal from the course options for their students. The institution responds to diverse student needs when compassion is incorporated into teaching methods. Students foster compassionate leadership skills through course components, such as peer coaching, quality feedback and interactions between students and faculty, and flexible learning environments. Students will have opportunities to develop compassionate leadership skills when business courses include components such as experiential learning activities, compassion training, altruistic and charitable giving exercises, and business leadership course alignment with the U.N. SDGs.

Aligning Curriculum With U.N. SDGs

Business schools align their curriculum with the U.N. 17 SDGs for humans and the planet. These alignments are intended to help future leaders find solutions for social problems such as poverty; health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; reduced inequalities; and peace, justice, and strong institutions (United Nations, n.d.-a). When students immerse themselves in sustainable development, they are challenged with “inconvenient truths” (Moratis & Melissen, 2022, p. 215), such as human suffering and environmental deprivation. In their case study, Ortiz and Huber-Heim (2017) examined various teaching frameworks in undergraduate business ethics and CSR courses to determine an ideal model to ensure students learn best practices through curricular teaching, which can be applied to future workplace settings to address the first SDG goal of eliminating poverty. The researchers adapted a five-tiered framework developed by the International Association for Public Participation for development and training purposes, founded on effective decision making. The first level of the framework is the inform stage, where participants are given background information they will use to solve problems. The second level of the framework is the consult level, where participants provide their knowledge and experience of the problem. The third level of the framework is the involve stage, where student research teams actively engage with public stakeholders regarding the problem. The fourth level is the collaborative level, where the student research teams participate in an engaging simulation exercise to arrive at solutions to the problem by examining all angles. After piloting their course, Ortiz and Huber-Heim surveyed the students who reported satisfaction with their self-reported learning outcomes and a high satisfaction level for various experiential and problem-based learning activities. The researchers discovered that, as a result of the learning activities, barriers between the student, others, and the world disappeared, and the student felt a connection to the lived experiences of others across the globe. Through this heightened awareness, research participants were more responsive and respectful because they used their empathy skills by listening and showing respect for others.

Business curriculum can also be adjusted to encourage students to think about their roles in the corporate world and society. Business schools not only encourage business students to consider what contributions they can make to society but also develop leaders who shape society (Aksoy et al., 2019; Hoffman, 2021). For example, Rhee and Sigler (2020) developed and implemented a curricular strategy that allowed students to grow as transformational leaders. The graduate students were administered the emotional and social competency inventory at the beginning and end of the program. During the 2-year graduate program, the curricular content and pedagogical focus shifted from management to leadership, performance to learning and development, and theory to practice. Upon assessment, the students reported during their final reflection papers their newly developed EI due to the material learned during the program. Rhee and Sigler concluded the study's concepts could be transferable to other institutions if faculty agreed with the program's focus shift from theory to practice. Aligning business curriculum to the modern world allows students to reflect on their future roles. In addition to revising business curriculum to be consistent with a changing world, business programs can look for other opportunities, such as charitable giving activities, to provide students with activities to learn compassionate leadership skills in classroom settings.

Altruism and Charitable Giving

Charitable giving activities are another way faculty can reimagine curriculum. Corporate philanthropy is one of the key components of CSR, where firms dedicate charitable contributions to social causes to address the needs of society (Gautier & Pache, 2013). This type of curricular shift supports student development through exposure to self-growth and self-compassion (Chwyl et al., 2021; Paxton, 2021). For example, Paxton (2021) provided details of an Economics of Altruism course featuring charitable grant funding in public policy and business disciplines. Student participants energetically interacted with nonprofit organizations to distribute $10,000 in grant funds through the Learning by Giving Foundation (2023). The outcome of the course-designed charitable giving project resulted in the students working together to decide how the grant would be distributed and the semester ended with a grant ceremony in celebration of the grant recipients. The students benefited by participating in community service that made a positive impact on society and examining and addressing social issues through philanthropy. The students were able to apply microeconomic concepts, which are not easily grasped in traditional economics classrooms. In addition, through experiential learning and self-reflection journaling, students became more engaged with the curricular contents of the course and had the opportunity to help the local community. Lastly, the local community organizations selected by the students benefited from the grants awarded by the student teams, and in addition, the university matched the grants awarded to the organizations. Paxton recommended the course be adjusted between levels of students and could be taught at the graduate level, and the allocation of real grant funding to the local community.

In another example of an in-class charitable giving activity, Chen et al. (2014) introduced business students to a humanitarian logistics project (HLP). They identified learning outcomes were greater for people who participated in the HLP than in traditional supply chain courses. The authors introduced a new term, smart compassion, which is the donation of money to established relief organizations, and they proposed that the humanitarian public service announcement project would allow students to compete with other students at a national level. However, the authors would also help students learn about humanitarian logistics by having a socially conscious influence on society. More specifically, the researchers analyzed exam data, peer evaluation scores, and student satisfaction surveys. They found the learning outcomes for the 53 students who participated in the HLP project were significantly greater when compared to other supply chain topics covered in class. Thus, HLP not only allowed students to understand how humanitarian logistics directly impacted the world around them but also gave them an opportunity to build valuable project management skills while working collaboratively. Similar contests can be incorporated into course curriculum throughout a semester to enhance team-based learning, helping students see their connection to the world around them while building interpersonal skills that are all transferable to the workplace. Like charitable giving activities, service-learning experiences allow students to develop compassionate leadership skills.

Experiential Learning: Service Learning

Faculty can introduce compassionate leadership concepts in action through service learning. Self-awareness and career efficacy can be enhanced by engaging in service-learning experiences. Corriveau (2020) examined the effects experiential learning activities had on business students' development of authentic leadership skills, identifying activities that help students develop self-awareness and prepare them to be responsible managers. Corriveau examined an MBA leadership course with 200 students consisting of five traditional in-class sessions and an intensive 2- or 3-day leadership camp where students discussed and applied authentic leadership frameworks. Corriveau confirmed that the teaching method, which blended service-learning experiences and traditional lectures, strongly and positively influenced how students developed self-awareness. In another study by Sabbaghi et al. (2013) on the effects of a financial literacy service-learning project on MBA students' development of leadership characteristics and interest in social issues, participants volunteered in a semester-long financial literacy program for elementary and high school students in urban and underserved districts. Study participants taught the foundations of personal banking and covered topics such as checking savings and credit union accounts, insurance, credit, and investments. Students completed self-evaluations and were assessed on their self-perception of their leadership qualities and interest in social issues. The student participants reported an improvement in their knowledge of the importance of employee growth and development, the understanding of the significance of the role of empathy, and the magnitude of the skill of listening in the workplace. Future leaders can gain self-awareness and develop career efficacy by engaging in service-learning experiences and can apply these valuable skills in their future professions. Service-learning projects help business students develop awareness by learning how to attend to the needs of others, which is a future skill they can use to nurture the development of their future employees. In addition to service-learning experiences, compassion training helps students hone their empathetic leadership skills.

Compassion Training for Students

Since the early 2010s, business researchers have been interested in measuring the compassion levels of business students in graduate programs (Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2013; Konecki, 2017; Russell et al., 2020; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2019; Weng et al., 2013). Compassion training and mindfulness training programs can assist an individual with advancing compassion, empathy, and the prosocial lens of the economy (Konecki, 2017; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2019). For example, topics such as Buddhist economics can be included in business curricula. The concept embraces compassion through mindfulness and meditation; explores economic activities' origins, circumstances, and consequences; and can be taught in business schools (Konecki, 2017).

In their quantitative study of business and accounting students attending state universities in the southern parts of the United States, Russell et al. (2020) examined the compassion levels of accounting and business students. Russell et al. grounded their exploratory study on the belief that accounting and business students should use soft skills in addition to technical skills in their professions and that soft skills should be instilled with the ethical values of the accounting profession. The research team was also interested in whether compassion was important to students pursuing careers in accounting and business. Most participants reported a need to be kind, which the researchers connected to compassion. Compassion is important to individuals entering the business and accounting fields on both personal and corporate levels. Russell et al. concluded it is essential for accounting and business students to learn skills to provide compassionate care for their colleagues, clients, and investors if these students want to succeed in the business field.

Callister and Plante (2017) were interested in isolating the characteristics that contribute to elevated levels of compassion among graduating undergraduate college students. In their quantitative study, the researchers collected survey data from the educational institution's senior survey. The students provided demographic data, political and social preferences, and information about volunteerism during their undergraduate experience, in addition to completing a compassion scale. After analyzing the survey data, the researchers found that students who were politically liberal, religious, studied natural and social sciences, participated in community services, strove to help others, and participated in diversity training had higher levels of compassion when compared to their peers. The students who responded that their highest priority was to achieve a high income level received the lowest score on the compassion scale. Community service and diversity training positively affected students' compassion scores.

Business scholars have analyzed longitudinal data of business students to examine their EI levels as a measure of compassionate leadership. In their exploratory analysis, Boyatzis, Hongguo, and Passarelli (2013) examined longitudinal data of over 1,000 MBA graduates who participated in a leadership skills development course. The researchers analyzed data from assessments and abilities, such as the Learning Skills Profile, Self-Assessment/External Assessment Questionnaire, Emotional Competence Inventory–University Version, and the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory–University Version. The researchers bridged the capabilities and assessments of multiple cohorts over time. They created 12 competencies: achievement orientation, adaptability, coach and mentor, conflict management, emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, empathy, influence, inspirational leadership, organizational awareness, positive outlook, and teamwork. The researchers discovered that participants' self-perceived learning skills were higher at graduation than entry into the program. Leadership courses positively impacted the individual's development of the measured skills and capabilities.

Researchers have also measured the compassion levels of business students after completing compassion training and discovered positive correlations (Condon et al., 2013; Weng et al., 2013). Weng et al. (2013) evaluated if short-term compassion training positively affected altruistic behavior when participants' brains were scanned when playing an economic behavior simulation. The research team discovered that a 2-week compassion training among healthy adults increased altruistic behavior after training, which was connected to changes in brain stimulation involving social, cognition, and emotional regulation. Similarly, Condon et al. (2013) investigated if an 8-week meditation course positively affected a group of adults' compassion levels and if they were more likely to respond to the suffering of others. After the meditation training, the individuals continued their involvement in the study by participating in a series of tasks in a laboratory setting, where the researchers evaluated and measured the effect of meditation on the participant's compassion levels. The researchers found the meditation training directly boosted compassionate reactions among the study's participants. Although this study was conducted with adults, it might be worthwhile for business faculty to incorporate meditation as a technique for students to develop their compassionate leadership skills.

The Application of Intercultural Communication Skills in Conjunction With Compassionate Leadership Skills

Business students can develop other skills (e.g., intercultural communication) and expand their mindsets in conjunction with building compassionate leadership skills. For example, EI and intercultural communication skills development through EI and intercultural communication assessments (Fall et al., 2013), compassion-based mindfulness interventions (Draper-Clarke, 2020), immersion travel experiences (Tuleja, 2014), and applied in-class activities (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017) can prepare students for careers in a global market. In addition, when students learn self-compassion through a growth mindset, the process has multiple positive effects on their well-being, mental health, self-esteem, self-efficacy, future educational aspirations, and learning outcomes (Kwan et al., 2022). Jakobsen et al. (2023) argued that learning cultural values and norms should be complemented by the development of compassion skills. Intercultural communication and growth mindset components can be incorporated into business leadership courses to allow students to build compassionate leadership skills.

Intercultural Communication. With the expansion of global business, educators continually explore ways to prepare business students for intercultural interactions, and intercultural communication skills in conjunction with EI skills help prepare students for these global professional experiences (Draper-Clarke, 2020; Fall et al., 2013; Ramsey et al., 2014). Business professors can provide students with applied activities such as mindfulness training, intercultural competence and EI assessments, conflict resolution case study analyses, in-class games and simulations, and international immersion trips to increase their intercultural communication levels.

Intercultural communication apprehension prevents students from being able to prepare for international professional experiences. However, through EI and intercultural communication skill development, students have the opportunity to hone these skills, which decreases their intercultural communication apprehension. For example, Fall et al. (2013) examined the EI and intercultural communication apprehension levels of 425 students who completed a survey with questions based on an intercultural communication measure and an EI scale, where participants were asked to self-report on their self-control, emotionality, sociability, and well-being. After their analysis, Fall et al. confirmed the EI subscales (i.e., emotional, social, and self-control) predicted intercultural communication apprehension. The evidence supported Fall et al.'s hypothesis that EI controls and decreases intercultural anxiety and that students with higher EI levels might be capable of easing anxiety caused by intercultural communication. EI can be incorporated in business and professional communication curricula to increase students' intercultural communication aptitudes to prepare them for future international interactions. This study illustrated students can be trained for real-world global business dealings by learning about

EI, taking EI and intercultural communication assessments, and improving skills based on scores.

Immersion travel experiences, in conjunction with in-depth class discussions, lectures, and student reflections, positively influence the development of students' intercultural communication skills. For example, Tuleja (2014) introduced a group of MBA students to cultural competence training before a 2-week cross-cultural immersion experience in China. Before the learning–travel program, the students attended lectures and discussions and read material promoting holistic worldviews. The predeparture lectures and discussions covered political, cultural, and societal issues regarding conducting business in China and delivered a base for learning about Chinese culture. After analyzing the pre- and post-trip reflective essays, Tuleja determined MBA students became more culturally sensitive because of the cultural immersion program. Therefore, when business programs include immersion travel experiences and detailed class discussions, instruction, and student reflections, students can develop their intercultural communication skills.

Professors teaching international business courses can help students increase their intercultural competence levels and intercultural communication skills through applied in-class activities (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017). In their study examining the development of international business students' development of intercultural competence skills, Corrales et al. (2021) found that in-class activities allowed students to build their intercultural communication skills, ultimately allowing the skills to be applied directly to the final capstone project for the course. The researchers discovered that by completing a capstone project that involved researching an international company and proposing and presenting a business plan for the company to expand globally from the perspective of the international company’s chief executive officer, business students developed intercultural communication skills. Business students expanded their knowledge of their culture and the culture explored during the capstone project.

Faculty have a plethora of ways they can embed curricular activities and introduce exercises as part of their pedagogical practices. For example, Barnga is a simulation that allows students to learn about cultural norms and behaviors (Andrade, 2021). Role-playing activities and simple cultural jeopardy games, where questions and categories are based on diverse cultures, can help students develop cultural awareness. Opportunities to taste-test ethnic foods, partake in in-class discussions of current world events, and participate in international business etiquette exercises can help students build cultural communication skills (Frank, 2017). Applied solutions for educators, such as lectures and workshops dedicated to emotional and social intelligence and its importance to the labor market, can provide business students with opportunities to develop emotional and social intelligence competencies (Fall et al., 2013).

Chapter Summary

Business researchers have identified compassionate leadership’s role in the classroom and the corporate world (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013; Konecki, 2017; Paakkanen et al., 2021; Russell et al., 2020; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2019; Weng et al., 2013). Grant et al. (2022) stated, “Compassion encourages solidarity, humility, transparency, stability, service to each other, a sense of the greater goal or good, and an investment in equity as the platform upon which humanity’s survival depends” (p. 8). This chapter scanned the history of U.S. business’ effect on the undergraduate business curricula. The researcher thoroughly discussed SDO and the double-bottom-line approaches and their effect on business curricula, including a conversation about the need for additional work regarding the inclusion of compassionate leadership principles in business curricula, which supported the idea that obsolete business course topics can be replaced with modern frameworks. The researcher reviewed J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of EI, adopted for this study, and discussed how it can help guide business faculty in reviewing components of compassionate leadership in business leadership courses. The researcher also reviewed Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership, which was adopted as the conceptual framework for the study, including a conceptual model of the blending of J. D. Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of EI with the Ramachandran et al. definition. The researcher highlighted the benefits of exercising compassionate leadership in the workforce by providing examples of compassionate leadership's impact on employee well-being and job performance, involvement in the fostering of a more ethical work environment, assistance in the cultivation of continuous compassionate leadership development through HR policy development, and impact on CSR. The researcher provided an overview of examples of how business educators can include compassionate leadership components in business curricula by aligning curricula with the U.N. SDGs, creating opportunities for business students to develop compassionate leadership skills when they participate in charitable giving activities in business courses, providing business students with experiences that can advance their compassionate leadership skills and foster self-awareness and career efficacy by engaging in service-learning experiences in business courses, and offering compassion training and intercultural communication development for students. Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the methodological focus of this study, including research design, data collection, and analyses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Corporate leaders are concerned with the current business education model and its impact on students and their future leadership styles (Succi & Canovi, 2020). One reason for their concern is the current business education model is not structured to support business students' development of compassionate leadership skills (Worline & Dutton, 2022). Increasing compassion may lower students' social dominance orientation (SDO), an aggressive and classified belief system that attributes individuals to low or high social standings, and increases sympathy through curricular and pedological improvements (Martin et al., 2015). Worline and Dutton (2022) suggested business curriculum can influence compassionate leadership skills if infused with compassion-focused topics, including empathy, ethics, the social impact of business, and sustainable business practices.

Research has also suggested business students are interested in including topics such as business ethics (Amblee et al., 2023), sustainable business practices (Moratis & Melissen, 2022), the role of business on social impact (Ortiz & Huber-Heim, 2017), and effective leadership development (Waples & Brachle, 2020) in the business curriculum. For example, including these topics in the curriculum can heighten students' awareness, prompting more responsive and respectful behavior toward colleagues through empathetic skills engagement (Moratis & Melissen, 2022). Business professors are becoming attentive to intentionally including compassion-focused topics in course design. Worline and Dutton (2022) found when professors instruct students with more compassion, students learn and act with more compassion.

Despite the expanding attention to compassionate leadership, business education programs must still consider aligning curriculum with societal changes for these concepts to transcend the classroom (Lavine et al., 2022). Dyck and Caza (2022) recommended replacing traditional business frameworks, such as the financial bottom-line approach and the classical management perspective, where leaders recognize problems or opportunities to enhance the financial bottom line, with the double-bottom-line model. The double-bottom-line model is a financial calculation that measures financial resource accumulation and maximization of social and environmental influence instead of quarterly profit and short-term stock value (Bernardez, 2009; Dyck & Caza, 2022). When business students learn about the importance and impact of adopting the double-bottom-line model to blend financial maximization, they can help address and combat societal and environmental issues (Bernardez, 2009). With the amplified need to understand compassionate leadership's role in social responsibility in professional and educational environments, business educators are ready to take a deeper look at business curricula (Lavine et al., 2022; Russell et al., 2020; Worline & Dutton, 2022). The increasing focus on social responsibility in corporations has underscored the opportunity for business education programs to assess their current business leadership curriculum.

This qualitative case study explored what, if any, components of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The following research question guided this study: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills?

The investigation was grounded in J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) theory of emotional intelligence (EI) and the Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership. Chapter 3 discusses the research approach and the researcher's worldview, including philosophical assumptions and the interpretive framework. The research design, participant selection, ethical considerations, data collection, instruments, and pilot study are discussed. The chapter concludes by reviewing the data analysis and information on the study's trustworthiness.

Research Approach

When researchers conduct qualitative research, they observe the world as it occurs and provide detailed explanations of their reflections (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). Qualitative research allows scholars to discover the meaning individuals attribute to their experiences through interpersonal involvements, detailed discussions, and complex explanations (Billups, 2021). Researchers who employ a qualitative design search for solutions to questions that explain social occurrences and apply interpretations by immersing themselves in the setting, describing the assumed underlying connections in an applied setting (Yin, 2018). They center themselves in the heart of the activity and interpret the research topic in a natural setting by collecting information from various empirical sources (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). This qualitative case study investigated undergraduate business leadership curricula and teaching.

The researcher interviewed students and faculty, conducted classroom observations, and analyzed course documents (i.e., textbook and student assignments) to examine if elements of compassionate leadership were present in the curriculum and instruction. A qualitative research design was selected in favor of a quantitative research design because it allowed the researcher to collect essential data points through personal and first-hand interviews with faculty and students (see Appendices B and C), and by directly observing the behavior and interactions of students and faculty, and curriculum in the classrooms (see Appendix D). A quantitative research study would not have allowed the researcher to collect data points related to human experiences.

Case Study Research Design

Qualitative case study method was the most suitable methodology for this study because it allowed the researcher to explore subjects in an applied setting not easily covered by other methods, where preliminary qualitative data were collected from varied points of view and through multiple qualitative sources (Yin, 2006, 2018). Case design includes several cases where researchers describe a single set of cross-case conclusions to comprehend an event, activity, or program occurring in a bounded system at a particular time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2023; Yin, 2018). The researcher of the current study chose a case study design to explore a modern phenomenon from multiple perspectives in an applied setting (Yin, 2018). This design allowed the researcher to develop cases based on the qualitative findings and their incorporation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The more a research question describes a modern condition, such as the need to revise the business curriculum to align with societal changes, the more the case study research approach will be applicable (Yin, 2018). The selected research design helped bridge and triangulate the important data collected from multiple views through interviews (see Appendices B and C), observations (see Appendix D), and document analysis (see Appendix E) to the research question.

Case studies are relevant when the research question needs a thorough and detailed examination because the researcher has little or no control over the research topic. The researcher of the current study followed an inductive approach by collecting and analyzing qualitative data, which led to the emergence of overarching themes and assisted with developing a simplified theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An explanation of this inductive approach is addressed in further detail later in this chapter. The researcher collected data from three business leadership courses from one institution, which categorized this study as a case study, where multiple cases were built, allowing a case comparison (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher used the qualitative case study method to explore compassionate leadership elements in business curriculum and instruction, gathering data from one higher educational institution, which deemed it a case study.

Worldview

As an individual conducting complex academic research, acknowledging and reflecting on one's perspectives and experiences is important. In qualitative research, philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks guide individual research actions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher's presumptions and beliefs were based on previous experience as a seasoned faculty member, having taught undergraduate and graduate business students at several public and private colleges and universities. These beliefs were built upon teaching economics and business statistics courses to diverse students with vast backgrounds, skillsets, and experiences. Following a methodological philosophical assumption, the researcher identified with the postpositivist interpretive framework because of previous quantitative research experience.

Philosophical Assumptions

As a result of the researcher's management teaching experience and professional experience, they adopted a methodological philosophical framework that focused on the research process and the interpretation of the study's findings to create new knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Cypress, 2017). Under this assumption, the researcher applied an inductive research approach, where they built logic from the ground up. They anchored the study to the research question and collected the data before making generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher first collected data from interviews with student and faculty participants and course observations, and then developed overarching patterns, which they compared with existing literature on compassionate leadership in business curriculum. The researcher then followed a data analysis plan that involved the evaluation of accumulated rich information. Lastly, the researcher used the scientific method to build knowledge of the content matter and communicate study discoveries through writing and presenting the findings.

Interpretive Framework

A researcher's interpretive framework is grounded in their principles and outlook on the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). Following the postpositivist interpretive framework, researchers adhere to the scientific method when writing, identifying variables, comparing groups, and testing theories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended researchers conducting qualitative research adopt Yin's (2018) postpositivist framework to analyze case study comparisons because data are collected from multiple sources and viewpoints. Researchers who follow a postpositivist interpretive framework blend qualitative and quantitative methods, creating independent and objective analysts who approach qualitative study through interpretive and critical perspectives while isolating themselves from subjective beliefs (Neesham, 2017; Žukauskas et al., 2018). The researcher collected qualitative data through conducting interviews with students and faculty (see Appendices B and C), course observations (see Appendix D), and analyzing course documents (see Appendix E). The researcher also collected quantitative data through the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix F) to connect with participants on a deeper level by creating thorough participant profiles.

A postpositivist researcher limits bias in a study because they remain neutral and rely on multiple forms of data triangulation, using their quantitative skills when conducting data analysis

(Spencer et al., 2014). The postpositivist interpretive framework follows a sequence of phases connected by logic to interpret the findings, capturing multiple perspectives from participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the researcher of the current study curated the qualitative case study findings following a scientific approach. More specifically, the researcher followed a sequential streamlined process, where the first piece of data was collected at a single point in time through the first course observation, then after the first data collection point, the researcher collected the second data points through the second course observation. The researcher then collected the third data points through the third course observation. After the data collection through the course observations, the researcher then collected data through the faculty interviews, and then through the student interviews. The next step in the scientific process involved the researcher collecting data points through the review of the textbook and extra credit assignments. The researcher selected this scientific and sequential process because it allowed them to carefully begin with a theory, and then collect data from the multiple data collection sources that supported the theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Details on the data collection process of this particular study are provided in the data collection section of this chapter.

Research Design

A study's research design connects the research questions with the data collected and the conclusions drawn by the researcher (Yin, 2006). This qualitative case study investigated three undergraduate business leadership courses to determine if elements of compassionate leadership were taught through curriculum and instruction. The researcher of the current study purposefully selected a data collection site to set the stage for understanding the problem and considering the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through an internet search of colleges and universities in Massachusetts, the researcher located over 30 leadership courses taught in undergraduate business schools and informally connected with faculty to gauge their interest as potential participants. Site selection for the case study was one private 4-year higher education institution in Massachusetts. Two interested faculty participants were identified as the gatekeepers. Billups (2021) described gatekeepers as people at a research site who grant access to participants, approvals, entrance, and scheduling. The researcher selected this institution because it reported infusing a global mindset, social responsibility, and diversity in the curriculum, and these components aligned with the focus of the study. The researcher selected student participants from a face-to-face undergraduate business leadership course. The course was selected because the syllabus used business case studies and concentrated on managerial and leadership skill development. The researcher collected data for this qualitative research study through individual interviews with two business faculty participants and five undergraduate student participants enrolled in the selected courses where the researcher was the primary data collection instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition to interviews, the researcher observed 90 undergraduate students in the three sections of business leadership courses (see Appendix D). Lastly, the researcher conducted a document analysis of course content, such as the course textbook and student assignments (see Appendix E).

The researcher administered the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix F), which included the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix G) to collect demographic data from all 90 students before classroom observations. Of the 90 students, 51 students volunteered to complete the survey. The Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire collected student and faculty participants' names, phone numbers, email addresses, names of schools attended, academic programs, field of interest after graduation, age at the time of the study, anticipated graduation date, ethnicity/race, and gender. The Self-

Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment measured compassion. The researcher conducted in-class observations of the three undergraduate course sections at the participating university, totaling 90 students. Following classroom observations, two individual interviews with faculty participants and five individual interviews with select student participants were conducted. In addition, the researcher reviewed course materials, such as the textbook and two student final reflection papers. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), sample size depends on the specific qualitative research design being used and they suggested case studies include four or five cases. The researcher examined three observation cases, two faculty interview cases, five student interview cases, one textbook case, and two extra-credit assignment cases, totaling 13 cases for this case study, creating a rich data set.

Participant and Site Selection

Yin (2018) described a case as a person where data on the individual are gathered. A multiple case study collects data pertaining to multiple individuals, yielding more results than a single case study design because a more extensive participant base is needed. Yin recommended selecting between six and 10 participants from one site with multiple cases to predict results using replication or contrasting results based on theoretical reasoning. In this study, seven individuals were interviewed (i.e., two faculty participants and five student participants), and 90 student participants were observed across three classrooms on a single occasion.

Faculty participants who were interviewed met the following criteria for study inclusion: (a) current instructor of the designated business leadership course at the designated college or university, (b) participated in individual interviews, (c) provided access to a classroom observation, (d) shared public course documents, and (e) completed the Qualifying Demographic

Questionnaire including the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix G).

Student participants who were interviewed met the following criteria for study inclusion: (a) enrolled in business-related majors in the university's school of business; (b) enrolled in the designated business leadership course at the designated college or university; (c) completed the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire, including the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix G); and (d) participated in individual interviews. There were no requirements for grade point average or year in college. The researcher used purposeful sampling because the courses and the students' learning environments prepared the researcher for an optimal opportunity to appraise and examine the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The qualitative case study methodology also allowed the researcher to follow a purposeful sampling strategy by being able to select the participants, site, and documents that would best help them understand the research problem and research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

As of Fall 2022, the participating university had 5,501 students, of which 4,439 were undergraduates. Approximately 13% of the 4,439 undergraduate students were international. As of 2022, the participating university had 34,331 alumni across all business majors. The undergraduate business leadership course selected for the study focused on managerial and leadership skill building through written analysis and oral presentations of change management case studies.

Ethical Considerations of Participants

The researcher was certified in social and behavioral research training (see Appendix H) through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, completed three doctoral-level research courses, and used this education and training to consider all ethical components related to the case study. The researcher provided the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at the participating university and the researcher's university (i.e., Regis College) with details regarding individual rights, privacy, confidentiality, participant informed consent, and the storage of data (Billups, 2021). The researcher also provided the research site with official procedures and an informed consent form before the study to confirm ethical management of research materials and received permission from the research site to conduct the study. To confirm accountability and transparency, the researcher assured participants of their privacy while participating in the study and that data would be stored correctly in protected locations for 3 years after the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The faculty and student interview participants were assigned pseudonyms during the data collection phase of the study to protect participant identity, and transcripts with legal names were stored separately from the collected data (Saldaña, 2021). The interview documents and student demographic data were stored in a password-protected electronic folder and will be kept for 3 years after the study, and the study's files will be permanently destroyed after 5 years (Saldaña, 2021).

Data Collection

Upon receiving IRB approval from the Regis College IRB (see Appendix I) and after the receipt of the site permission letter (see Appendix J) to begin data collection at the participating university, the researcher requested access to undergraduate class curriculum materials, observations of the undergraduate classes, and scheduling of faculty interviews through email.

Classroom Observations

Direct nonparticipant classroom observations of the undergraduate classes at the participating university served as the first qualitative data collection method. The researcher connected with the faculty participants to set dates and times to observe the business leadership courses. Once scheduled, the participating faculty members guided the researcher on typical class meeting length, flow, classroom setup, protocol, and any additional class particulars relevant to the observation. At the beginning of the in-class observations, the faculty participants introduced the researcher to the class. The researcher took several minutes to explain the study and provided a QR code for the faculty and students to complete the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire and the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment to review and sign the informed consent form (see Appendix K). This QR code also gave access to the participant recruitment flyer (see Appendix L) so students could learn more about participating in the follow-up individual interview.

Compassionate Leadership Scale. The researcher administered the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix G) to the student and faculty interview participants as a tool to measure compassion levels. The Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment questions are answered based on a Likert scale, with questions ranging from 1 (*agree*) to 7 (*disagree*). The Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment is a scale based on Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) broad definition of compassionate leadership as "a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth" (p. 55). There are 11 questions with the statement: "I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of . . . as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth," where the 11 characteristics from the Ramachandran et al. broad definition of compassionate leadership are inserted into the statement, and the respondent ranks their response from 1 (*agree*) to 7 (*disagree*). The McCroskey (2006) Generalized Belief

Measure (GBM) was used for this scale because the researcher had not yet determined that the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment was a valid and reliable instrument. This measure has been adopted in organizational communication research studies to record various beliefs (McCroskey, 2006). The GBM was created to be applied in various contexts, beliefs, and attitudes instead of one topic. Previous testing of the measure was reliable and valid, with an alpha above .90. Researchers have used the GBM for over 40 years, and the reliability estimates have been durable. The data have upheld the hypotheses, so researchers have confirmed its reliability and validity for its intended purpose in communication research (McCroskey, 2006).

Once faculty and students finished completing the questionnaires, the researcher joined the class as a nonparticipant observer. Using the observation protocol, the researcher listened to and watched each of the three 90-minute classroom lectures, and conducted the same observation process in all three classrooms. The researcher chose a seat in the back of the classrooms and observed the components of the classes, which included presentations from a guest speaker, an in-class activity, in-class discussions, and instruction by the faculty. The researcher recorded descriptive and reflective notes on the setting, event, activities, and insights (Billups, 2021). Lastly, the researcher remained passive and pleasant during the class observation.

Observational Protocol. The researcher designed the Observation Protocol Guide using Billups (2021) and Creswell and Poth's (2018) observational protocol methods (see Appendix D). The Observation Protocol Guide allowed the researcher to build a chronology of how the activities progressed during the class session and to record reflections from the occurrences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, because the study was grounded in the blending of the Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership and J. D. Mayer and

Salovey’s (1997) four-branch model of EI as the conceptual framework, the Observation Protocol Guide (see Appendix D) included a section for the researcher to record the description of the concept and observations of interactions and behaviors that aligned with the conceptual framework components (Billups, 2021).

After the classroom observations, the researcher thanked the faculty participants and the students for allowing the class observation and discussed next steps, including a reminder to register for the individual interviews using the QR code. The researcher remained available after class to assist interested students with scheduling interview appointments. Directly after the observations, the researcher prepared detailed notes by creating a deep narrative description to help them develop interpretations during the data analysis phase of the study (Billups, 2021). The researcher entered the detailed notes recorded during the observations into the separate qualitative case study database (Saldaña, 2021). After the data were entered, the researcher conducted an early phase of data cleaning in the database before coding by correcting data entry discrepancies before the data analysis phase of the study (Saldaña, 2021).

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews served as this study’s second qualitative data collection method. After classroom observations concluded, faculty participants continued to share the QR code with students through email and the course learning management system to increase recruitment efforts. Interested participants scheduled an interview date and time through Acuity, a scheduling application. Students who qualified for the study received an appointment confirmation through the Acuity scheduling application, including a Zoom meeting link and copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix K). At the start of each faculty and student interview, the researcher reviewed the informed consent and answered questions about the study’s objective, meeting length, the participant's right to leave the study, and the intent to use the findings to develop a compassionate leadership capstone project (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The Zoom application recorded the interviews with the faculty and student participants. The researcher maximized accuracy by recording the video, taking detailed notes, and saving and uploading transcripts from the Zoom interview sessions to the separate qualitative case study database (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Semistructured Interview Guide. The researcher designed the semistructured interview guides for the faculty participants (see Appendix B) and student participants (see Appendix C) with eight open-ended questions and probes aligned with the Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership. The researcher followed Castillo-Montoya's (2016) procedures for the interview guide design and for preparing and conducting responsive interviews. Four question types guided the discussion: introductory, transition, primary, and closing (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Introductory questions were neutral and noninvasive. Primary questions, linked by transition questions as needed, were the most pertinent to the research question and purpose of the study. Primary and transition questions tended to be the most difficult questions of the interview, given the depth of content and feelings they elicited. Closing questions were less challenging for the participants to answer and provided closure to the interview.

In addition, the faculty and student interview guides followed the Castillo-Montoya (2016) interview protocol refinement framework. The refinement process consisted of four phases, which included confirmation that (a) interview questions were parallel to the research question, (b) the researcher created an interaction grounded by conversation, (c) the researcher was given guidance on the interview protocol, and (d) the interview protocol was piloted.

Once the interviews concluded, the student participants received a $10 electronic gift card for coffee emailed from the researcher to show appreciation for their involvement in the interview. The researcher downloaded and stored the Zoom transcripts and the detailed notes recorded during the interview in the qualitative case study database, which also housed other data collection sources.

Document Analysis

The third data collection method was document analysis, an organized method of reviewing printed and electronic materials (see Appendix E). Due to the qualitative case study method, the interviews and document collection process coincided. Document analysis involves skimming, reading, and interpreting information using thematic and content analysis (Bowen, 2009). For this study, reviewing undergraduate business leadership course materials was a relevant data source and served to triangulate the data. Triangulation allows researchers to corroborate the multiple methods of data collection (Bowen, 2009). The researcher of the current study created an initial list of pertinent materials to collect for examination, such as course readings and assignments.

Document Analysis Guide. To create a document analysis guide, the researcher referenced Bowen's (2009) document analysis guide design. The researcher created a document analysis tool (see Appendix E) to review, evaluate, and record notes about the selected course components and recorded a separate entry for each document for each site in the separate qualitative case study database. The design of the document analysis guide allowed the researcher to record variables such as document name, data analyzed, location/source and author/creator, original purpose of the item, date created, and if it related to the EI theory and the

Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership as they reviewed the selected pertinent course materials.

The researcher accessed the course textbook, used by the three classes, through the book's publisher. The researcher spent a week reading the electronic textbook and taking detailed notes. The faculty participants shared the two extra credit assignments electronically with the researcher, where the researcher spent a couple of days reviewing the assignments and taking detailed notes. The notes containing the review of the textbook and extra credit assignment were stored in password-protected files. The researcher downloaded and stored the detailed notes and course materials in the qualitative database.

Once all data were collected and uploaded to the separate qualitative case study database, the researcher prepared data for the analysis phase. Personal identifiers, such as names, were replaced with pseudonyms, and identifiers were kept in a separate file to ensure participant privacy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher conducted an early phase of data cleaning in the database before coding and corrected data entry discrepancies before they reached out to participants a final time to thank them for participating. The researcher closed the email loop with gratitude and promised to follow up with the results once the data were compiled and published.

Pilot Test

The researcher pilot tested the qualitative case study method's student and faculty interview guides (see Appendices B and C). A pilot test aims to improve, revise, and expand the research instruments and helps researchers enhance the data collection strategy; it also assists in evaluating the severity of researcher biases and helps restructure the interview questions, modify the observational protocol, and revise the research procedures and data collection plans

(Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The pilot participant was selected by convenience, access, and physical location, and this strategy allowed for a less formal and more sustained relationship between the researcher and participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The researcher contacted a business leadership instructor at the researcher's institution of employment to request participation in the piloting phase of the study. The faculty participant agreed to participate upon IRB approval. The researcher reviewed the Faculty Interview Guide (see Appendix B) and the Student Interview Guide (see Appendix C) with the faculty and tested the Document Analysis Guide with the syllabus from the faculty participant's leadership class (see Appendix E), reviewing course materials such as course readings. The researcher documented findings in a qualitative case study report, which contained notes about the research design and field procedures and was the model for the final qualitative case study method (Yin, 2018). These procedures provided additional support during data collection. The researcher updated all collection guides and used the revised guides during the official data collection phase.

Data Analysis

Once data collection concluded, demographic data and compassionate leadership scores were analyzed for 51 out of the 90 students observed. The data analysis phase included organizing the data, performing a preliminary review, coding, organizing themes, and reporting and interpreting data findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The process began in the data management phase, where the researcher organized electronic files and developed a file naming system. The initial qualitative data analysis involved transcribing the interview recordings and observation documents, where notes were marked directly on the transcribed documents. The researcher selected codes, allowing them to identify the research problem. As the researcher read the transcripts and observation documents, the researcher searched for ideas, themes, and examples and then coded the concepts the interviewee emphasized. The researcher explored and scanned the texts for emergent ideas, began writing memos during each reading session, and created a system for organizing the memos. Crosstabulations helped the researcher examine the associations between the codes and categories, and the tables were used as tools to understand the connection between the variables.

As the researcher became more familiar with the data sources, they began labeling, organizing, deciphering, and dismantling the data (Saldaña, 2021). The researcher dissected the data, developed classifications, applied codes, and identified themes. The researcher applied codes to text sections to identify emerging themes (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). During this time, the researcher continued writing memos, updating the code tracking system, refining the codes and categories, and maintaining a separate notable quote section (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2021). As the researcher continued to read the materials, synthesis summary documents were drafted that discussed the patterns that emerged from the data (Saldaña, 2021). Data began to be coded, where text data were categorized into groups, and the researcher ensured data reliability by reviewing the transcripts in detail, confirming their dependability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2023).

The researcher sorted and resorted the qualitative data and provided written summaries (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In addition, the researcher clarified findings by joining themes and creating categories. Qualitative data analysis techniques helped examine the data, connecting the findings to EI theory, which framed the study. Thematic analysis was used to arrange the topics into larger concept sections and themes to reflect upon the information, and the researcher used pattern matching to connect the data to EI theory (Saldaña, 2021). As a result of pattern matching, the researcher confirmed the study's evidence was reviewed and the contrary explanation was examined (Yin, 2018). In addition, the researcher ensured the focus was on the most important part of the case study, and showed an understanding of the primary rationale and conversation about the case study interest matter. Once qualitative data analysis was completed, the study's generalizability and how it could be used in other settings was identified (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Finally, the researcher ensured they provided credible and convincing evidence for each conclusion. These cautionary steps were included in the final case study report, edited, and revised to synthesize and describe the researcher's findings accurately. The unalterable version of the case study report included the final narratives, tables, and graphs categorized by collection type (i.e., interview, observation, and document) to give the reader a full view of the case presented.

Research Trustworthiness

Researchers often grapple with the issue of bias or the potential distortion of research outcomes due to unintended influences from the researcher and research participants (Creswell, 2014). For this particular study, the researcher used multiple procedures and replication logic to ensure the accuracy of the findings, which confirmed the study's credibility and dependability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2023). The researcher ensured student and faculty interviews were private to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, which increased the credibility of the relationship (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, interview guides for the faculty participants (see Appendix B) and student participants (see Appendix C) were used and revised to ensure consistency in questions so responses from each interview could be compared. An observation guide (see Appendix D) was also employed and revised to confirm credibility in reflective and descriptive observations so data from each observation site could be compared.

To ensure dependability, the researcher documented the processes and procedures of the qualitative case study's database (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The case study database contained numeric and narrative data types and was dependable evidence, ensuring reliability because an external individual could review the case study database and the final report (Yin, 2018). The database contained reliable data from interviews and observations, such as narrative compilations, reflections, and descriptions recorded during the observations and interviews. The organized data stored in the case study database allowed the researcher to extract, aggregate, and analyze the information quickly. Convergent evidence triangulation allowed for the construct validity of the case study and the retention of a sequence of evidence. A different researcher following the same steps would be able to replicate the study.

Limitations and Delimitations

Three limitations were identified: (a) the researcher may have omitted faculty and student participants' interpretations of curricula, (b) variation among research participants' definitions of compassionate leadership, and (c) the possibility of low generalizability. The proposed solutions for offsetting the limitations are also included. This section also discusses the delimitations, which were determined requirements for the study's faculty and student participants.

Limitations

The first limitation was the possibility that the researcher omitted student and faculty participants' interpretations of curricula. The subject matter had room for interpretation, so the participants' subjectivity to the content matter was limited. Qualitative researchers acknowledge the presence of biases and subjectivity but minimizing the impact on the research process and findings can still be challenging. This limitation was controlled by pilot testing and data triangulation (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The second limitation was variation among research participants' definitions of compassionate leadership. The participants might have defined and conceptualized compassionate leadership differently, and may also have explained how one receives, learns, and develops compassionate leadership differently. To offset this situation, the researcher provided the student participants with the study's definition of compassionate leadership.

The third limitation involved the possibility of low generalizability; specifically, multiple researchers examining different courses, or another group of students, could generate varying results (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study's credibility, strength, and range of understanding were confirmed by triangulation from multiple data sources (Billups, 2021). Suter (2012) posited codes should be corroborated through cross validation, and categories converged through multiple data sources. By identifying codes and themes in multiple qualitative data sources, the researcher triangulated the information and presented validity in the conclusions. Researchers can review for authenticity by determining the expected value of the study and how the participants benefit from the research (Billups, 2021). The researcher ensured reliability by using a case study protocol and creating a case study database to maintain collected data in an extractable way (Yin, 2018).

Delimitations

The researcher determined the requirements for the study participants. Faculty participants were business faculty teaching business leadership development courses. Student participants were enrolled in courses in business-related majors in the participating university's school of business. This specific group was selected because they were conveniently located in Massachusetts, where the researcher resided. In addition, the researcher was familiar with the selected schools, courses, and academic programs.

Chapter Summary

This qualitative case study aimed to understand how the components of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses. More specifically, it explored the case study's research question: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills? Compassion can spread throughout an organization and is a needed skill when collaborating with clients, customers, colleagues, employees, and society (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017). With the increased attention toward compassion and compassionate leadership in professional and educational environments, there is a timeliness to understanding the components of business curricula related to compassionate leadership. Therefore, exploring the components of business leadership courses to determine if components assisted business students in developing compassionate leadership offered valuable insight to support student development in this area and added to the limited body of literature on compassionate leadership covered in undergraduate business courses. Chapter 4 includes a discussion regarding the data assembled from course observations (see Appendix D), the student and faculty interviews (see Appendices B and C), and from the course documents (see Appendix E). The researcher reviews the themes uncovered and relates them to the findings from Chapter 2 of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings

Compassion is a beneficial aptitude that undergraduate students can build in the classroom. Business researchers have discovered the value of compassionate leadership taught in the classroom and emulated in corporate environments (Martin & Heineberg, 2017; Worline & Dutton, 2022). This qualitative case study sought to understand what elements of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of emotional intelligence (EI) and Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership set the foundation for this study to explore the following research question: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills? This chapter discusses qualitative data collection through class observations, faculty and student interviews, and document analysis.

Research Site

The American Council on Education (2020) classified the site selected for this qualitative case study as a 4-year institution located in Massachusetts with 6,830 students as of 2020. The institution was selected for this study because it was committed to instilling a global mindset, social responsibility, and diversity in the curriculum, and these commitments aligned with the focus of this study. The undergraduate business course, per the syllabus, stated it used business case studies and concentrated on managerial and leadership skill development. The researcher observed three sections (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3) of this undergraduate business leadership course and interviewed five student participants and two faculty participants. To triangulate the interview data, the researcher completed a document analysis of course syllabi, the course textbook, and two extra credit student reflection assignments.

Overview of Participants

The undergraduate business leadership courses were offered in Fall 2023 at the participating institution. The researcher collected demographic information using the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix G) from 51 of the 90 students to ensure participant criteria were met. Table 1 highlights student participant demographic data and Table 2 presents faculty participant demographic data. Of the student participants, 41% of the students identified as female and 59% identified as male. No students were in the 16–18 years age category, 96% of students were in the 19–24 years age category, 4% were in the 25–44 years age category, no students were in the 45–59 years age category, and no students were in the 60 years and older category. Students could select multiple options when asked to identify their race and ethnicity. Overall, 52% identified as White; 26% identified as Asian or Asian American; 10% identified as Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx; 8% identified as Black or African American; and 4% identified as Middle Eastern or Northern African. Professor Bell was a White man in the 60 years and older age category. Dr. Fleming was a White woman in the 45–59 years age category.

Table 1

Student Participant Demographics

Characteristic	*n*	% of respondents	Mean compassionate leadership score
Gender			
Female	21	41	53.71
Male	30	59	54.40
Age			
16–18 years	0	0	N/A
19–24 years	49	96	52.05
25–44 years	2	4	67.00
45–59 years	0	0	N/A
60 years and older	0	0	N/A
Race/ethnicity			
Asian or Asian American	13	25	47.27
Black or African American	4	8	63.33
Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx	5	10	47.67
Middle Eastern or Northern African	2	4	73.00
White	26	51	53.94
N/A	1	2	N/A
Total students	51	100	54.11

Note. *N* = 51. Percentage of students above the mean was 47%.

Table 2

Faculty Participant Demographics

Faculty participant	Gender	Age	Race/ethnicity	Compassionate leadership score
Professor Bell	Male	60 years and older	White	N/A
Dr. Fleming	Female	45–59 years	White	64

The students were asked to provide their current undergraduate major. Of the 51 students, 16% reported having a double major, 18% reported majors in accounting and corporate accounting, 12% reported majors in business analytics and information systems, 12% reported majors in business economics, 14% reported majors in finance, 18% reported majors in marketing, 18% reported majors in management, and 6% reported majors in sports management. Lastly, the students were asked to list the profession they wanted to enter after graduation. Of the 51 students, 28% reported their future profession was undecided, 15% reported an interest in finding a certified public auditor or accountant role, 9% indicated they were interested in pursuing a career in business analytics, and 9% reported an interest in entering a position in marketing after graduation.

Statement of Findings

Data for this qualitative case study were collected through three classroom observations, semistructured interviews with two faculty and five student participants, and document analysis of the course textbook and two extra credit student reflection assignments. The concept of compassionate leadership skills development in the curriculum was present in all three qualitative data sources.

Classroom Observations

The researcher observed three sections of the undergraduate business leadership course (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3), following the Observation Protocol Guide (see Appendix D). The purpose of the classroom observations was to collect data on the presence and inclusion of compassionate leadership in teaching and learning practices. Two dominant themes emerged: (a) compassion was present through interaction and integration, and (b) students developed compassion through experiential learning.

Finding 1: Compassion Was Present Through Interaction and Integration. The researcher observed opportunities for students to develop compassion through interactions between the instructor and students and among the students in the business leadership classes. Compassionate interactions manifested in various ways: (a) instructors created a comfortable classroom environment and taught course concepts with empathetic themes, (b) students participated in peer-to-peer group work, and (c) students and the guest speaker engaged in social interactions.

Regarding instructors creating a comfortable classroom environment, during Classroom Observation 1, Dr. Fleming, an associate professor of management and entrepreneurship, used students' names while lecturing and inserted personal examples into the lecture to bring the curriculum to life. Before the start of class, the students had active and lively discussions while Dr. Fleming walked around the room checking on group members. During the in-class activities, Dr. Fleming made a point to connect with individual students about assignments, questions, and other items. These gestures paralleled Worline and Dutton's (2022) recommendation for faculty to show compassionate concern for their students. Dr. Fleming also created handmade student nameplates, which she collected at the end of class. Students were encouraged to share thoughts and questions about the day's lesson privately with the intent that Dr. Fleming would follow up after class if students noted areas of support or concern. Dr. Fleming explained to the researcher before the start of class that the student nameplates were a technique to connect with the students. These observed faculty-to-student gestures, check-ins, active discussions, personal references, and individual class follow-ups aligned with Hamilton and Petty's (2023) research, which suggested that using universal design for student learning assists students in recognizing their strengths to grow their competencies.

In all three observations, peer-to-peer group work gave students the space to socialize quietly after completing their in-class activities or before the start of classes. Worline and Dutton

(2022) found similar support essential to creating a learning environment in their study on enriching classroom design. Students in the current study increased their awareness and aptitude for compassion as they worked enthusiastically and collaboratively in small group assignments during Dr. Fleming's class (i.e., Observation 1). The researcher also observed students enhancing their aptitude for compassion. At the same time, students interacted with the guest speaker from Professor Bell's classes (i.e., Observations 2 and 3), who answered the students' questions attentively and engaged students in lively case study discussions, soliciting volunteers and feedback from the group.

Classroom observations also presented opportunities for students to increase their awareness and aptitude for compassion through integrations. The researcher defined integrations as embedding empathy in the course content matter. Worline and Dutton (2022) suggested that professors who teach compassionately and students who learn and act with more compassion collectively transform the business education system. During Observation 1, Dr. Fleming encouraged students to share examples from their experience of professionals who led or exhibited compassion. In small groups, students shared and discussed their examples, considering the factors that caused individuals to exhibit compassionate and empathetic leadership qualities. With these examples, each group developed a leadership action plan and shared with the rest of the class during the debrief. This classroom observation aligned with Balwant (2016) and Page et al. (2019), who found that when faculty integrate compassionate leadership elements into the business leadership curriculum, they provide students with tools to make more empathetic choices.

The researcher observed another example of compassionate curricular exposure during an active lecture in Professor Bell's classes (i.e., Observations 2 and 3). During these lectures, Professor Bell shared a recent article about the rising trend among U.S. companies struggling to encourage employees to return to the office after working remotely. Professor Bell challenged the students to consider the scenario and share techniques and incentives employers might offer their employees to return to the office. Students brainstormed corporate benefits like additional vacation time, bonuses, and office benefits. Professor Bell's integrative activity presented real-world concepts that students could consider and respond to in the context of the discussion. This integration aligned with Andrade's (2021) finding that experiential learning activities can prepare students for careers in a global market: experiential learning activities allow students opportunities to hone their compassionate leadership skills.

Finding 2: Students Developed Compassion Through Experiential Learning. The researcher observed ways in which the student participants developed compassion through experiential learning during various activities in all three classroom observations. During Observation 1, Dr. Fleming ran an experiential learning activity focusing on groups. Dr. Fleming conducted a short lecture on in-groups versus out-groups to prepare for the activity. The discussion centered around these groups in work settings, including leadership approaches and employee responses with both groups. Dr. Fleming provided students with leadership strategies for handling in- and out-group members, including the importance of leaders exercising active listening skills, where leaders use their emotions to ensure employees can share their ideas, attitudes, and feelings. Dr. Fleming suggested leaders show empathy to out-group members and suspend their feelings while trying to understand the feelings of others. Leaders should also recognize out-group members' unique contributions and help them feel included. Lastly, leaders need to create a special relationship with out-group members and give them a voice, which allows the employees to feel empowered. After these curricular tips were shared, Dr. Fleming randomly divided the 30 students into groups of three or four. The parameters of the experiential learning activity included the following:

- Each student was challenged to think of a time in an in- or out-group situation at work, a club, sports, or volunteering.
- The student group members had 10 minutes to share their examples with their group members.
- Each student team identified the most applicable example and further discussed it as a group, which they presented to the rest of the class during the debriefing portion of the exercise.
- The student teams identified the members in the in-group versus out-group and considered the factors that caused individuals to be part of the in-group versus out-group.
- The groups then developed a multistep leader action plan to change the situation and share their solutions with the class.
- Lastly, a student from each student team volunteered to share their example with the rest of the class during the debrief.

During the debrief, the student groups identified and selected multiple strategies provided by Dr. Fleming earlier in the lecture portion of the activity and aligned these strategies to their professional examples. Three out of the seven student groups agreed that “showing empathy and using listening strategies improved relationship and communication,” and five out of the seven student groups shared that they would “help nongroup members feel included and would provide nongroup members with a voice to feel empowered to act and to contribute.” One student group identified using the “showing concern strategy,” and two of the seven student groups communicated that they would apply the "creating special relationships and connections" strategy. Dr. Fleming closed the discussion by offering additional strategies the students could apply to their examples to create an inclusive work environment. The experiential activity allowed students to apply compassionate leadership skills and EI, such as listening to others, showing empathy and concern, helping others feel included, and creating personal connections to a real-world example.

Classroom Observations 2 and 3 provided another opportunity for the researcher to see first-hand the impact of experiential learning in building compassion through the curriculum. Professor Bell invited an executive consultant from the biotechnology industry to discuss the importance of relationship building, collaboration, and communication to optimize workplace performance. The speaker stressed that leaders must be adaptable and use flexible leadership techniques to build bonds across varied work styles. Doing so provides a greater chance for leaders to understand individuals, their challenges, and their commitment. The speaker discussed the value of transparency, where relationships are formed based on trust. These observations aligned with Konig et al.'s (2020) finding that chief executive officers with elevated levels of EI are more likely to notice cues and trends, more likely to build stronger relationships with stakeholders, and are more dedicated to improving the organization's relational structure. The speaker explained, "Leaders have two obligations: to know their shortcomings and work on them by using self-reflection and the feedback of others, as well as to build relationships by understanding their employees' capabilities and readiness as the framework for situational leadership."

Professor Bell's guest speaker provided an example of when they hired consultants to lead a training session on situational leadership for their team and the consultants provided them with practical techniques to address managerial problems as they develop professionally. The speaker also shared an example of when EI assessments were administered across the company, using Goleman’s (2019) book on EI. The guest speaker explained the book and assessments helped him and his staff learn EI skills and how to apply the techniques in a business setting. This observation finding is consistent with the discoveries made by Van Oosten et al. (2019) and Weng et al. (2013), who uncovered the positive relationship between short-term compassion training, worker performance, and engagement. For participants in the current study, the exposure to outside guest speakers tethered to the workplace supported the work of Callister and Plante (2017) that students can build empathy when exposed to experiential learning activities.

Interview Findings

The researcher interviewed two faculty participants who taught three sections of the undergraduate business leadership development courses. The researcher also interviewed five students enrolled in the undergraduate business leadership development courses. The researcher collected data using the semistructured interview guides for faculty and students (see Appendices B and C), which were tailored so participants could share their views and interpretations of compassionate leadership. Interviews were recorded using Zoom.

Table 3 provides the demographic data collected from the Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix F) and the Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix G). Two faculty participants contributed to the interview portion of data collection. Professor Bell was an adjunct management and entrepreneurship professor and a national sales manager of a biotechnology company. He had over 30 years of experience in the corporate workforce. He taught two sections of the undergraduate business leadership development course (i.e., Observations 2 and 3). Dr. Fleming was an associate professor of management and entrepreneurship. She had taught, conducted academic research, and led academic departments for over 20 years. She taught one section (i.e., Observation 1) of the undergraduate business leadership development course.

Table 3

Student and Faculty Interview Participant Demographics

Identifier	Age	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Compassionate leadership score	Current major	Expected profession after graduation
Emily	19–24	Female	White	65	Business management	Undecided
Rory	19–24	Female	Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx	74	Business analytics and information systems	Data analyst
Lane	19–24	Female	Middle Eastern or Northern African	54	Business marketing	Real estate/property management
Madeline	19–24	Female	White	N/A	Business economics and global business	Real estate, financing/ banking
Louise	19–24	Female	Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx	N/A	Corporate accounting and finance	Undecided
Professor Bell	60+	Male	White	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dr. Fleming	45–59	Female	White	64	N/A	N/A

Five student participants volunteered to contribute to the interview portion of data collection, and the student interview participants were assigned a pseudonym to maintain anonymity. Emily was a White woman in the 19–24 age category, majoring in business management. She was undecided about what profession she would like to explore after graduation. Rory was a Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx woman in the 19–24 age category, majoring in business analytics and information systems. She hoped to pursue data analytics after graduation. Lane was a Middle Eastern or Northern African woman in the 19–24 age category majoring in business marketing. She desired a job in real estate/property management after graduation. Madeline was a White woman in the 19–24 years age category, was majoring in business economics and global business, and was interested in a profession in real estate finance/banking. Finally, Louise was a Hispanic or Latino or Latina or Latinx woman in the 19–24 age category, was majoring in corporate accounting and finance, and was undecided about what profession she was interested in after graduation.

The researcher asked student and faculty participants to complete a Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment (see Appendix H), which calculated compassionate leadership scores. Fifty-two out of the 92 participants (i.e., one faculty and 91 students) completed the assessment. The Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment had a total available score of 77 points. The mean score for participants who completed the assessment was 54 and the median score was 57 (*SD* = 17.89). Additionally, 25 (47%) of the student respondents received a score above the average, indicating the students scored themselves higher on the assessment. A higher compassionate leadership score indicates that the individual exhibits more compassionate leadership skills. Of the five student interview participants, three completed the assessment. Two students' scores (i.e., 74 and 65) were above the mean score, and one student's score (54) was equal to the mean. Of the two faculty interview participants, one completed the assessment, and their score (64) was higher than the average.

Four dominant themes emerged from the student and faculty interviews: (a) faculty and student participants' interpretations of compassionate leadership were inconsistent and varied, (b) students developed compassion through experiential learning, (c) faculty had the tools to assess students’ compassionate leadership skills, and (d) compassion was present through interaction and integration.

Finding 1: Faculty and Student Participants’ Interpretations of Compassionate Leadership Were Inconsistent and Varied. Faculty and student interviews both demonstrated inconsistencies in the interpretations of compassionate leadership. More specifically, the faculty and students offered their own unique definitions of compassionate leadership, which differed from the Ramachandran et al.’s (2023) definition of compassionate leadership.

Faulty Interviews. During interviews, faculty discussed how managers used EI and intercultural competence skills when leading with compassion. When asking Professor Bell to define compassionate leadership, he anchored his response to his over 30 years of experience in the corporate world. Drawing from his professional recollection, Professor Bell described compassionate leadership as “developing one’s employees and showing one’s staff that they are committed to their development.” When asked to define compassionate leadership, Dr. Fleming responded, “I have not really thought about the term compassionate leadership until participating in this study, and I might have dismissed the concept 10 years ago.” Dr. Fleming explained how she was now paying more attention to compassionate leadership concepts, noticing how they were woven into her course’s curriculum. Dr. Fleming defined compassionate leadership as placing employees’ needs at the forefront of business performance. Dr. Fleming further explained, “Compassionate leadership considers the social–emotional needs of the employees and the interpersonal needs in the workplace and adjusts and offers allowances where someone has specific needs.” Dr. Fleming’s definition aligned with Ramachandran et al.’s (2023) definition of a compassionate leader used in this study, which is an individual who displays behaviors and demeanors such as empathetic concern, altruism, sagacity, reliability, understanding, responsibility, truthfulness, charisma, pride, self-care, and self-growth in response to helping others to pursue their goals and relating to their advancement. Dr. Fleming reflected on the presence of compassionate leadership and EI in her classes and shared:

> I see an overlap between compassionate leadership and the leadership styles covered in class, such as transformational and servant leadership styles. These theories and concepts I cover in the business leadership course include developing emotional intelligence skills. I see emotional intelligence in the examples that students share with each other, and EI surfaces through the leader interviews and individual experiences students share in class.

Although Professor Bell and Dr. Fleming taught the same business leadership course, their definitions of compassionate leadership varied, impacting their curricular approach.

As the interview progressed, compassionate leadership discussions segued to intercultural competence. The researcher asked faculty members for their thoughts on whether intercultural competence influences one's ability to lead with compassion. When provided with the study's definition of intercultural competence and asked if it influences one's ability to lead compassionately, Professor Bell cited a case study he wrote with Dr. Fleming. Professor Bell shared:

> The case study highlights a company that has corporate offices in Australia and the United States. Most of the company's employees assume that individuals in Australia and the U.S. speak English and that they understand and interpret information similarly. However, through writing the case study, I was able to provide examples of ways that the employees in Australia and the United States identify situations and interactions differently.

Business scholars have discovered that with the growth of global business, faculty are researching methods to prepare business students for intercultural interactions, and EI and intercultural competence skills can prepare students for future global business dealings (Draper-Clarke, 2020; Fall et al., 2013; Ramsey et al., 2014).

Dr. Fleming stated, "I see a strong connection between intercultural competence and compassionate leadership." Dr. Fleming further reflected:

> If individuals develop intercultural competence, they, by default, have compassion because they see the situation from the other person's perspective. Also, if an individual is unable to understand another individual's perspective, they cannot be compassionate. I feel that students should be provided with a broad definition of intercultural competence because it can help students recognize the various groups they are part of.

Research has suggested EI skill development can be embedded in applied in-class activities as a technique to increase students' intercultural competence aptitudes in preparation for future international professional interactions (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017). Dr. Fleming shared, "I envision an intentionally designed course dedicated to cultural competence." Students develop compassionate leadership skills by building their EI with intercultural competence aptitudes, two skillsets that compassionate leaders use effectively.

Student Interviews. Like faculty interviews, the researcher provided students with Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) definition of compassionate leadership. The researcher began the interview by asking the students if they could think of a leader who fit this definition and, specifically, to identify the qualities that made them compassionate leaders. Emily, a student in Professor Bell's class, mentioned she looked for respectful, personable, and approachable leaders who made employees feel comfortable. Emily described a compassionate leader as "an individual who creates a comfortable and relaxed work environment while still ensuring that there is productivity." Emily said she valued leaders who balanced a calm and productive work environment. When Emily was asked what she learned in her business leadership course related to compassionate leaders or compassionate leadership, she identified quality management as a leadership style similar to compassionate leadership.

When Rory, a student in Dr. Fleming's class, was asked to describe the qualities she valued in a leader, she responded, "I value leaders [who] are empathetic, compassionate, transparent, honest, trusting, hardworking, demonstrate that they care about their employees, and perceive the true individuals within each employee." As the conversation about compassionate leaders progressed, Rory talked about the qualities she admired in her old supervisor, such as forming relationships, connecting with people personally, and understanding their employees' needs. These qualities defined compassionate leadership for Rory. When Rory was asked what she learned in her business leadership course related to compassionate leaders or compassionate leadership, Rory talked about servant leadership and compassionate leadership as having similar qualities.

Lane, a student in Professor Bell's class, mentioned how she valued a passionate, humble leader who viewed themselves as equal. She shared that a compassionate leader significantly impacts all the members of an organization and its culture. These aspects of leadership provide strong mentorship and help motivate others Lane described her brother, whom she worked for at his real estate company, as a compassionate leader "because he takes care of employees, he carves out of his personal time to ensure that his employees are developing personally and professionally." She talked about him as a down-to-earth team player who comforted his employees.

Madeline, a student in Professor Bell's class, shared that she valued a leader "who is empathetic, compassionate, understanding, trusting, dependable, humane, supports emotionally, a friend, and is willing to help others." Madeline identified her manager at a local credit union as a compassionate leader, having known this manager for some time and witnessed her develop as a leader. Noting her manager's involvement in compassionate leadership seminars and referencing her business leadership course, Madeline explained:

> In my business leadership course, we discussed compassionate leadership and focused on the empathetic side of leadership. We talked about how employees can rely on the leaders for support, [employers] can be there for employees, and employers can adjust the workflow based on their individual needs.

Madeline described her credit union manager as this type of leader, stating her manager viewed all employees as important; supported their mental health and well-being; and created a culture that resembled a large, diverse, and happy family. When Madeline was asked what she learned in her business leadership course related to compassionate leaders or compassionate leadership, she identified charismatic leadership as a style that "seems like compassionate leadership, where employees are receptive to leaders who are positive and optimistic." Madeline added, "I recognize that charismatic leaders contribute to lower stress levels of the employees."

Louise, a student in Dr. Fleming's class, said she valued leaders who followed through, provided structure for their employees, and were committed to creating a work environment that supported a healthy work–life balance. Louise explained:

> I am a residential assistant at my university, and I view my residential director as a compassionate leader because she asks her staff for feedback while holding them responsible, is present by working in the office, establishes boundaries between

> professional and personal lines, focuses on the needs of her staff members, and inspires her staff to think critically to accomplish their goals.

Across interviews, clear similarities and differences became apparent in the faculty and student participants' views of compassionate leadership and the characteristics of a compassionate leader. When the students were asked what they learned in their business leadership course related to compassionate leaders or compassionate leadership, Emily identified quality management as a leadership style similar to compassionate leadership. Rory recognized servant leadership and compassionate leadership as having similar qualities. Madeline identified charismatic leadership as a style that "seems like compassionate leadership, where employees are receptive to leaders who are positive and optimistic." Madeline added, "I recognize that charismatic leaders contribute to lower stress levels of the employees." The faculty and students shared valuable examples by drawing from prior professional experiences and perceptions of how students could develop compassionate leadership skills by building their EI and intercultural competence aptitudes.

Finding 2: Students Developed Compassion Through Experiential Learning. Faculty and students provided their views on the impact of experiential learning in developing compassionate leadership skills and shared curricular examples where compassionate leadership was highlighted or embedded in the curriculum. Across all interviews, faculty and students identified experiential learning activities inside and outside of the classroom as approaches to which students could build compassionate leadership skills.

Faculty Insights on Teaching Compassionate Leadership Through the Curriculum. When asked to identify how compassionate leadership qualities can be taught in the classroom, Professor Bell identified "experiential and applied learning activities connected to real-world business problems, such as in-class discussions, case studies, and final team projects as techniques for communicating and including leading with compassion in their teaching." This finding aligned with research by Corriveau (2020), who found that experiential learning activities let students develop self-awareness and prepare them to be responsible leaders. Professor Bell acknowledged that offering real business examples, such as in-class experiences, role-playing, and experiential learning exercises, impacted building skills that aligned with compassionate teaching practices. Professor Bell posited, "I facilitate the class through a discussion on how they would manage a situation if they were the leaders of the companies, where the faculty member encourages the students to try to put themselves in the situation." Professor Bell's experiential teaching technique aligned with Tallberg et al.'s (2022) finding that business educators can create environments for in-depth application of course material to solve problems in the real world and can inspire students to use their critical-thinking skills to reflect on how the course material impacts industry problems. When asked to identify what ways these leadership qualities can be taught in the classroom, Dr. Fleming pondered upon the notion that she would have students include a question asking leaders in the live leader interviews to describe what compassionate leadership looks like in their company and then would tie these questions into a class discussion. Dr. Fleming also recommended, "I should have the students also complete a reflection assignment on their compassionate leadership attitudes and skills." Dr. Fleming further described the scaffolding of compassionate leadership components in the business leadership curriculum; assignments and activities would increase from simple to complex throughout the semester as opportunities for these leadership qualities to be taught in the classroom.

Student Insights on Learning Compassionate Leadership Through the Curriculum. Students shared many thoughts, examples, and suggestions related to the curricular aspect of experiential learning and building a more compassionate individual through several interview responses. When asked to explain how the curriculum was teaching students to lead with compassion or to be future leaders with compassionate leadership qualities, Lane explained she was learning how to be an effective leader in her business leadership courses through experiential learning activities. She shared, “Listening to business leaders present in class is a beneficial in-class activity, and students can apply the theories they learn in class to the business leaders’ stories and presentations, and these experiences help students become self-aware.” Lane discussed how she connected the in-class exercises, such as when the professor provided the students with a hypothetical leadership scenario and then prompted them with what-if situations. Lane elaborated, “Students can think about what they would do in a particular situation and are able to apply the theories learned in class to real-world situations.” This finding was supported by the Rhee and Sigler (2020) study that examined business curriculum. The research team identified that when faculty align business curricula to the modern world, the connection allows students to reflect on their future roles in companies and the world. Louise explained, “The content within the leader development course has allowed me to enter a self-discovery journey.” This student reflection was supported by the Matheson and Sutcliffe (2017) study that found experiential learning opportunities help students develop when they have opportunities to self-reflect. Louise discussed how the curriculum taught them to lead with compassion. She shared, “I was not aware of the distinctive styles of leadership, and after taking the course, I learned that I am fascinated by leadership development and compassionate leadership and would like to learn more about them." Louise concluded her interview by sharing with the researcher that the leadership class had been her favorite while attending the university.

Student Insights: In-Class Activities Related to Compassion. When asked to speak to and provide examples of in-class activities, readings, assignments, or course outcomes related to compassion and empathy, Madeline recalled an activity where students were challenged to create a speech as a leader during a labor strike in their mock organization. She explained how students were asked to use positive negotiation tactics to communicate empathy and concern for their employees. Louise shared, "Videos and scenarios used within the leadership classroom are helpful, and students can apply the concepts and theories to real-world problems by working through a solution." Louise further elaborated:

> Students in the business leadership course watch videos about leaders, and the instructor inspires them to think about whether the leader is using compassionate leadership components and motivates them to explain why or why they are not using compassionate leadership skills.

The student participants provided insights into the current in-class activities that allowed them to develop compassion and shared additional recommendations for additional experiential activities in the classroom to develop compassionate leadership skills.

Student Recommendations for Experiential Activities in the Classroom. The student participants had several recommendations for experiential activities in the classroom for students to build compassionate leadership skills. Louise shared she would like to read further about compassionate leadership's effectiveness and she was curious to see its impact in the workplace. Rory proposed the faculty provide students with an actual leadership scenario, where they act and think as the leaders, analyze the case, and present their scenario to the class. Madeline found the in-class activities allowed her to develop compassion and empathy. She stated:

> I recognize the importance of linking the theory discussed in class to real-world situations and think business leadership courses should add more presentation opportunities for students where each week a student team is assigned a course topic, where they coteach a portion of the class by doing research and presenting to the class.

Business education scholars have discovered that experiential learning course components are beneficial when students work with teammates from diverse populations. As a result, students can apply altruism, compassion, and unity to their learning (Cochran & Weaver, 2017; Pedersen & Hammond, 2021). Rory recommended additional guest speakers in the classroom and shared:

> It would be beneficial for additional guest speakers to present to the class where the students can see what real-life leaders look like, to learn how they became leaders, and to apply the theories they learn in class to a realistic context.

Rory also recommended experiential learning activities include opportunities for students to interact socially during in-class discussions and outside the class. In their study on compassionate leadership, Worline and Dutton (2022) found that discussion groups and one-on-one exercises are pedagogical activities that foster trust and respect. In addition to insights into the current in-class activities that allow students to develop compassion, the student participants also shared additional recommendations for additional experiential activities outside of the classroom to develop compassionate leadership skills.

Student Recommendations for Experiential Activities Outside of the Classroom. The student participants had several recommendations for additional experiential activities outside of the classroom for students to build compassionate leadership skills. When Emily was asked how students could learn compassionate leadership if they could not learn it in the classroom, she identified volunteer activities as an experiential learning opportunity that would allow students to develop compassion. Emily stated, “Working with children could help students learn compassionate leadership skills.” Emily further explained, “When working with children, one must be patient and accepting.” This finding was consistent with Routon and Walker’s (2017) discovery that when college students participate in community service experiences, it builds compassion, impacts their philanthropic tendencies, and increases lifelong giving to charities. Madeline also advised, “Students in business leadership courses should be required to attend a university e-board meeting, where they observe the leader in action, where students can write a reflective paper noting how they would lead similarly or differently.” Louise recommended that outside of the business leadership classroom, “students could set personal self-development goals, read books, and watch videos on compassionate leadership, stay up to date with leadership styles, and participate in mentor circles to support learning of compassionate leadership development.” In addition to the materialization of the theme of compassionate leadership skill development through experiential learning activities during the interviews, the topic of the faculty tools for the assessment of students’ compassionate leadership skills through semester assignments and activities also appeared during the faculty interviews.

Finding 3: Faculty Had the Tools to Assess Students’ Compassionate Leadership Skills. When the faculty were asked to identify methods available to assess whether students’ compassion and empathy levels increased because of the curriculum and teaching, Professor Bell identified the course’s final project as an example and explained how students were given real business scenarios and leadership issues. They were challenged to create solutions, and the assignment gave the faculty a view of the students' perspectives. Professor Bell also explained that in addition to research, the students participated in live leader interviews, which "provides another point of reference rather than research alone." High-quality and engaging activities expose students to the greatness of taking calculated risks, measuring higher-order cognitive skills that students need when serving in leadership roles (Gialamas et al., 2020).

Dr. Fleming compared compassion and empathy to ethics, where educators cannot make students ethical, and they cannot make students compassionate and empathetic. Dr. Fleming shared, "Faculty members can assess the students' levels of knowledge to gauge how well they understand the components, approach, behaviors, challenges, and skills." Dr. Fleming also suggested faculty members measure students' compassionate leadership skill development based on the student's attempts and level of effort. Dr. Fleming added, "Instructors should be able to measure if the students are participating fully in a class role play, or if the student can understand what was difficult about the role-play exercise or be able to explain why it failed." Dr. Fleming's feedback aligned with findings from Taylor and Boyatzis (2012) that revealed when business instructors incorporate compassionate peer coaching techniques, such as including the topic in the course content, students learn active listening skills and basic coaching techniques and become more engaged when they have opportunities to participate in high-quality activities by creating bonds with their classmates and discovering their ideal selves and personal assets. Dr. Fleming described the process, which begins with engagement and then ends with assessment. She shared, "The students apply the courses concepts in a real setting, such as in their jobs or within their sports teams, and then could be assessed on their written reflections." Dr. Fleming recommended students deconstruct scenario outcomes using critical-thinking skills. Questions from classroom experiences could prompt this deconstruction. When instructors thoughtfully review assignments and provide constructive feedback, they show empathy for students' well-being and success, which also makes students more likely to engage with others (Worline & Dutton, 2022). The faculty participants in the current study identified various methods they used to assess whether students' compassion and empathy levels increased because of the curriculum and teaching, such as in-class role-play exercises, business scenario analysis, and semester final projects.

Finding 4: Compassion Was Present Through Interaction and Integration. When the faculty were asked to describe professional development they had that covered teaching compassionate leadership components in a business leadership course, Professor Bell credited his over 30 years of experience in the corporate workforce, reflecting on how the corporate world has changed and evolved and how he progressed as a leader. Professor Bell shared he grew to realize the importance of developing his staff and understanding their needs. When asked if he believed university programs consider compassion as an important contribution that a new graduate brings to the workplace, Professor Bell responded:

> I am unsure business leadership faculty talk about compassion enough with other faculty members. On an individual level, I am passionate about compassionate leadership, and notice faculty talking with each other more about compassion; it helps raise the awareness of the need for compassion in the corporate world.

Professor Bell added to his response regarding whether university programs consider compassion as an important contribution that a new graduate brings to the workplace that institutional policies, following a compassionate perspective, can help expedite compassion in the university as a key performance indicator. Professor Bell shared that he saw compassion as an important contribution to his university, and further added:

> I strive to weave compassion into the curriculum as a method to prepare students to work in teams. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, students are more drawn to independent work and prefer to work in silos rather than working in teams. I believe that when students work in teams, they learn to be more compassionate.

When asked whether university programs consider compassion an important contribution that a new graduate brings to the workplace, both faculty participants discussed the importance of compassionate higher education institutions and the use of compassionate teaching methods by facilities as essential components for students to develop compassionate leadership skills. Dr. Fleming explained compassion is not just about friendliness and positivity; it is about bending and adjusting to the needs of others. Dr. Fleming shared she observed a parallel between teaching and compassionate leadership, with compassionate teaching bending and being flexible for the students. She explained, "Compassionate teaching is the act of trying to understand how an educator can shape the roles and rules to align with students' skills and needs in a flexible manner." This statement was consistent with the study by Worline and Dutton (2022) that discovered professors who instruct compassionately and students who learn and behave with higher levels of compassion collectively transform the business education system.

Another contribution to Professor Bell's response to whether university programs considered compassion as an important contribution that a new graduate brings to the workplace was his identification of how the teaching center at the site university had professional development workshops for faculty to learn to be more flexible and attentive to students' diverse needs. This finding aligned with the study by Caddell and Wilde (2018), who found that a compassionate framework in a higher education setting allows individuals in higher education institutions to redesign throughout the institution. Dr. Fleming contributed to the conversation about the professional development workshops for faculty and shared:

> I attended faculty training on topics such as being student allies, Title 9, and recognizes that they include compassionate components and see that the COVID-19 pandemic was a revelation into the need for flexible accommodations for students. I recognize that they have become more compassionate and empathetic because of the COVID-19 pandemic and have not returned to pre-COVID-19 operations.

This finding supported Worline and Dutton’s (2022) discovery that professors who instruct students with more compassion create classrooms where students learn to be more compassionate. Academic leaders who demonstrate compassionate leadership skills exhibit that they support their peers, staff, and students and represent symbols of empowerment and transformative leadership (Worline & Dutton, 2022).

When asked to provide the barriers in the business curriculum that prevented business faculty from designing and delivering compassionate leadership course components to students, Professor Bell expressed he did not see barriers at this university and recognized the institution gave faculty the core framework to work with, and it was the instructor’s responsibility to deliver the components. Professor Bell further shared, “I am passionate about including the compassionate components of leadership and want to help students to get to see the compassionate elements of organizations.”

When asked to discuss the barriers in the business curriculum that prevent business faculty from designing and delivering compassionate leadership course components to students, Dr. Fleming reflected upon the notion business programs had conversations about the soft skills students need to enter the workplace. This reflection was consistent with the Succi and Canovi

(2020) discovery that since 2010–2015, there had been a significant increase in the focus on soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and self-awareness by hiring managers. Dr. Fleming shared she read management publications and recognized compassion was not discussed in finance, marketing, or accounting journals. Dr. Fleming elaborated, “A higher education institution’s academic dean needs to be in the background and supportive of compassionate leadership.” She identified that faculty members in Master of Public Administration, Master of Business Administration, and Master in Leadership programs were more likely to cover compassionate leadership concepts. Lastly, Dr. Fleming also recommended including a course centered on compassionate leadership as an elective for all undergraduate business students.

Document Analysis Findings

The researcher analyzed DuBrin’s (2019) 422-page leadership textbook, *Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills*, using the Document Analysis Guide (see Appendix C) to triangulate the interview and observation findings. This textbook was used in all three undergraduate business leadership sections (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3). The researcher also examined two extra credit student reflections completed by Rory (i.e., Student 2) and Louise (i.e., Student 5). Rory and Louise were students in Dr. Fleming’s class, and she offered her students the opportunity to complete an extra credit student reflection assignment where the students provided their definition of compassionate leadership. They were asked to describe their experience participating in the researcher’s interview for the study and were challenged to consider how they planned to incorporate compassionate leadership into their philosophy. The document analysis revealed three themes: (a) the textbook author’s definition of compassionate leadership varied with the faculty and student participants’ interpretations, (b) compassion was present through interaction and integration, and (c) students developed compassion through experiential learning.

Finding 1: The Textbook Author's Definition of Compassionate Leadership Varied With the Faculty and Student Participants' Interpretations. The textbook analysis and student extra credit reflection assignment analysis both demonstrated how the definition of compassionate leadership varied with interpretation.

Textbook Analysis. The document analysis of the textbook and student extra credit reflection assignments revealed inconsistent and varied interpretations of compassionate leadership among the faculty and student participants' interpretations and with the textbook's author. DuBrin (2019) described compassion as "the worry for the distress or welfare of others and the action of providing help to them during their discomfort" (p. 149). This definition aligned with Strauss et al.'s (2016) operational definition of compassion, where an individual identifies suffering, recognizes the universality of human suffering, emphasizes the person's suffering, manages unpleasant emotions, and expresses feelings in response to the feelings of others. DuBrin (2019) illustrated two actions that are essential when leading compassionately and shared, "The individual must create a setting where impacted employees can freely share their feelings, and the leader must also create an environment where employees who experience distress can find a technique to ease their suffering" (p. 132). This definition connected to the current study's definition of compassionate leadership, which is a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a method to leading others to reach personal and organizational growth (Ramachandran et al., 2023).

The course textbook also defined and applied EI throughout. DuBrin (2019) defined EI as "the capability to connect with others and to recognize their feelings and is comprised of four parts: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management" (p. 39). DuBrin (2019) further illustrated EI as "the capacity to understand one's own feelings, to have empathy for others, and control one's emotions to improve one's quality of life" (p. 39). DuBrin (2019) further explained:

> When leaders are self-aware, they recognize their own strengths and limitations, self-management is the capacity to regulate one's own feelings. Social awareness is when an individual has empathy for others and has a clear vision of organizational problems, and relationship management includes the relational skills for the capacity to visibly communicate and build relationships with others. (p. 39)

This definition was consistent with the definition of EI used in the current study, which is the capacity to process complex information about one's own emotions and the emotions of others and an individual's capability to use this knowledge as a compass for reasoning and actions (J. D. Mayer et al., 2008). J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model supports this definition and states EI is when an individual manages emotions to attain specific goals; understands emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions; uses emotions to facilitate thinking; and perceives emotions accurately in oneself and others. Dubrin explained that when EI spreads from the employees and the leaders throughout an organization, it creates group identity and mutual trust, resulting in the maintenance of EI at a collective level.

Dubrin (2019) explained a leader's use of EI when leading compassionately. However, the students' definitions in their extra credit assignments varied.

Student Extra Credit Reflection Assignment Analysis. Rory and Louise, students in Dr. Fleming's class, were asked to provide their own definitions of compassionate leadership and to explain how managers used EI when leading in the extra credit student reflection assignments. Rory's extra credit reflection assignment expressed her explanation of when managers used EI when leading with compassion. She stated:

> Leading with your heart, being there for people, being empathetic, trying to understand and get to know people to be able to fuel positive change. A compassionate leader is balanced and focuses on the person as much as the task. They get things done by being present, caring, direct, and transparent.

Rory further described a compassionate leader as someone empathetic about one's struggles, who inspires respect and is perceived as competent because of the trust they inspire.

Louise's reflection paper expressed her explanation of when managers used EI when leading with compassion. She shared:

> Showing compassion for employees establishes a personal and professional relationship, which makes employees more comfortable. Overall, being a compassionate leader is about showing kindness to others and actively listening to their concerns or ideas. As a result, a more positive work environment will ultimately lower employee burnout and dissatisfaction.

In Rory's reflection paper, she identified her personal leadership philosophy. She stated:

> I always try to lead my life with compassion, it's important to sometimes step back and see things from a different perspective, understand that there are cultural and multigenerational differences, and that by being empathetic and transparent, people will learn to trust and follow you.

Rory’s reflection that students in the leadership course received multicultural communication training was consistent with Wang Guénier’s (2020) finding that multicultural communication pieces of training can have a positive impact on empathy, intercultural business communication, and intercultural awareness. The student’s classification was also consistent with the Drury-Grogan and Russ (2013) discovery that intercultural awareness training allows leaders to show their interest, making them more likely to use alternative cultural business communication methods. The students could not only define compassionate leadership in their own words, but also described how managers used EI when they led compassionately. Most importantly, they shared how they would incorporate both concepts into their leadership philosophies.

Finding 2: Compassion Was Present Through Interaction and Integration. The textbook analysis and student extra credit reflection assignment analysis both showed how compassion was present through interaction and integration.

Textbook Document Analysis. The researcher identified discussions and examples of how leaders developed compassionate leadership skills through interaction and integration in the workplace during the document analysis of the course textbook. These identifications were transferrable to the classroom, and the textbook’s author offered business students practical applications of compassion in managerial situations, such as emphasizing compassion during crises, listening with compassion when interacting with others, and displaying compassion when leading mindfully (DuBrin, 2019). Dubrin (2019) explained:

> Two actions are required by the individual when leading compassionately: the leader must build an environment where affected employees can openly discuss their feelings,

> and the leader must also build a setting where employees who experience pain can find a method to alleviate their own suffering. (p. 132)

Dubrin (2019) further clarified examples for both actions, including organizational leaders providing employees the time and space to talk after a crisis or disaster and the establishment of a relief fund for employees and grief counseling.

Dubrin (2019) described group EI as when EI is distributed between the employees and the leaders throughout an organization, and EI is sustained at a collective level. Hewison et al. (2018) explored compassion in organizations, created a framework of compassion, and divided the framework into action and impact. The action themes included assistance through pain, role modeling, recognition of staff, kindness, listening and assurance, discretionary effort, and sustaining morale through change. The impact themes included feeling secure, valued, proud, and empowered; direct improvement in patient care; creating or sustaining a positive culture; and improved emotional resilience. The goal of the Hewison et al. study was to provide organizations with a guide to implement the compassionate care framework in response to their specific organizational needs. Hewison et al. envisioned that compassion could be immersed throughout all levels of organizations, impacting policies, programs, and procedures, as a method to enhance compassion at the organizational level.

The textbook's author discussed organizational initiatives that leaders can implement to increase compassion and EI throughout the organization. Some recommendations for organizations included providing EI training and assessments for employees administered by skilled professionals and offering follow-up training (DuBrin, 2019). The author provided another organizational initiative for leaders: the implementation of 360-degree feedback reviews, which are formal evaluations of managers where data are gathered from their employees, peers, customers, and suppliers. DuBrin (2019) also discussed how organizations hire executive coaches to assist leaders in developing EI skills. In addition, DuBrin shared at length various diversity training programs for organizations, such as training for employees on cultural intelligence, cultural sensitivity, and divergent learning styles. DuBrin explained that people who adhere to a divergent learning style have a wide range of cultural interests and are curious to experience other cultures, experience travel, and build relationships with people from other countries and cultures. Lastly, the author discussed the usefulness of diversity training for leaders and employees in organizations to increase awareness and empathy for individuals different from themselves and as a technique for sharing their feelings about work environment problems. The surfacing of diversity training programs for organizations as a method for increasing awareness and empathy was also consistent with findings from the course observations. This result was also detected in the literature review section of this study. Callister and Plante (2017) discovered that diversity training positively affects students' compassion scores.

These findings were consistent with concepts that emerged from the literature review for this study. Business scholars identified that EI, compassion training, loving-kindness meditation, and mindfulness training programs could assist an individual with advancing compassion, empathy, and the prosocial lens of the economy (Konecki, 2017; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2019). Business scholars have also found that business students can prepare for hands-on global business dealings by completing EI assessments (Boyatzis, Hongguo, & Passarelli, 2013; Fall et al., 2013). One finding that surfaced during the document analysis of the textbook was the hiring of executive coaches by organizations as a strategy to help leaders. This approach aligned with a finding from this study's literature review. Van Oosten et al. (2019) discovered that when employees are coached with compassion, their professional commitment and contentment are solidified. The implementation of 360-degree feedback reviews as a gauge for organizations to measure the emotional climate of an organization did not surface during the literature review for this study but emerged during the study's document analysis phase. Leaders of organizations can consider its function and usefulness as a method to measure compassion and EI throughout the work environment.

The textbook's author offered various leadership styles managers can implement to lead compassionately and use their EI skills. For example, the author discussed transformational leaders, who are skilled at reading the emotions of others (DuBrin, 2019). Another example DuBrin (2019) discussed is participative leadership, which focuses on positive relationships. Transformational and participative leadership styles emerged during the document analysis of the textbook, and DuBrin suggested the styles exhibit components of compassionate leadership. DuBrin further explained these styles allow managers to lead with compassion and use their EI skills to assist leaders in developing the skills to read the emotions of others and build positive relationships. Transformative leadership is a leadership style that appeared during the literature review for this study. Business scholars Caddell and Wilde (2018) identified that when academic leaders use compassionate leadership skills, they support their peers, symbolizing empowerment and transformative approaches.

Similarly, Shuck et al. (2019) discovered that leaders draw from multiple transformative styles, adapting their styles based on the situation, and other members of their organization begin to adopt a similar approach that flows throughout the organization. They further discovered that, historically, transformational leadership was the approach managers aspired to follow until scholars discovered a new classification, compassionate leadership, a closely related style. The EI assessments and training, 360-degree feedback reviews, and diversity training were just a sampling of tools that DuBrin (2019) recommended for leaders to use to develop compassionate leadership skills through interactions and integrations in the workplace.

Student Extra Credit Reflection Assignment Analysis. In addition to the textbook findings, the researcher of the current study identified discussions and examples of leaders developing compassionate leadership skills through interaction and integration in the workplace and classroom during the document analysis of the student extra credit reflections assignments. When asked to consider how she planned to incorporate compassionate leadership into her leadership philosophy, Louise acknowledged the following in her reflection paper:

> I want to be able to build relationships and trust with anyone that I am leading. I want to make sure everyone feels welcomed and that no "outgroups" are created. Like compassionate leadership, it's about balance and wanting to see everyone grow. It is important to inspire people to do better professionally and personally.

When asked to reflect on how she planned to incorporate compassionate leadership into her leadership philosophy, Rory compared compassionate leadership to servant leadership and stated:

> Compassionate leadership fits better with who I am now and who I want to be in the future. A servant leader is someone who sometimes gives too much, I think, and it could lead to burnout very quickly. From what I understood, compassionate leaders also lead in a giving way, but they are more relationship-focused, they are empathetic, they maintain authority, they are respected by people because they see that the leader is relatable and treats them as piers and is perceived as strong and competent.

Rory and Louise shared valuable examples of how they developed compassionate leadership skills through interaction and integration in the workplace and classroom, such as the in-group/out-group in-class activity, and provided details on how they would operationalize these components in their personal leadership development plan (PLDP).

Finding 3: Students Developed Compassion Through Experiential Learning. All students enrolled in the business leadership courses (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3) had to complete a PLDP for the semester, worth 10% of their total grade. The course syllabus described the PLDP in the following way:

> Through an individual leadership development project, students will conduct an in-depth self-examination of their leadership capacity and choose a leadership skill to develop throughout the semester. Students will have the chance to apply their leadership skills in a team project that seeks solutions to a specific leadership challenge, leading to a project implementation plan. Student teams will present their solutions in class; feedback to the presenters will reinforce oral communication skills.

The researcher identified examples of how students could develop compassionate leadership skills through experiential learning activities during the document analysis of the student assignments. Louise talked about her PLDP in her reflection paper, when she was challenged to think about how she planned to incorporate compassionate leadership into her leadership philosophy. She shared:

> When thinking back to my PLDP assignment and my personal philosophy of leading, compassionate leadership fits into it in some aspects. I want to be able to guide and create a vision for others while also inspiring them to have the freedom to be creative. It ties into every leadership style I mentioned in my PLDP. Boosting employee relationships, morale, and creating a vision for others is important to creating a successful team dynamic.

When asked to reflect upon how she planned to include compassionate leadership into her leadership philosophy, Rory discussed her PLDP in her paper. She shared:

> Compassionate leadership fits very well with my personal philosophy of leading. In my PLDP, I described myself as a servant leader, but after talking to the researcher, I realized that compassionate leaderships fits better with who I am now and who I want to be in the future.

The students offered valuable insights into how students could develop compassionate leadership skills through interaction and integration in the workplace and in the classroom through the development of PLDPs. By being able to visualize their roles as future leaders, students have the opportunity to create a step-by-step plan to operationalize their strategy.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher compared the three qualitative data sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis) for similarities in themes. The themes of students developing compassion through experiential learning and compassion were present through interaction and integration were discovered in the student and faculty interviews, course observations, and document analysis of the course textbook and student extra credit reflection assignments. Table 4 provides a crosswalk of the study’s qualitative findings by qualitative data source.

Table 4

Themes by Qualitative Data Source

Observations	Interviews	Document analysis
N/A	Faculty and student participants' interpretations of compassionate leadership were inconsistent and varied	The textbook author's definition of compassionate leadership varied with the faculty and student participants' interpretations
Students developed compassion through experiential learning	Students developed compassion through experiential learning	Students developed compassion through experiential learning
N/A	Faculty had the tools to assess students' compassionate leadership skills	N/A
Compassion was present through interaction and integration	Compassion was present through interaction and integration	Compassion was present through interaction and integration

Triangulation

The researcher used the qualitative case study method for the study's research design because it assisted in the triangulation of the essential qualitative data collected from multiple views through student and faculty interviews, observations (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3), and documents to the research question (Yin, 2018). The researcher was able to present validity of conclusions by triangulating qualitative data to find codes and themes in the multiple qualitative data sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cross validation corroborated codes and categories converged through multiple data sources (Suter, 2012). As a result, the union of the themes that emerged from the qualitative data sources supported the main phenomenon of the study, which was to understand what elements of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills.

Summary

The data assembled from course observations (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3) revealed the themes of (a) compassion was present through interaction and integration and (b) students developed compassion through experiential learning, which validated research findings from Chapter 2 of this study. The themes generated from the semistructured interviews with the students and faculty participants were (a) faculty and student participants' interpretations of compassionate leadership were inconsistent and varied, (b) students developed compassion through experiential learning, (c) faculty had the tools to assess students' compassionate leadership skills, and (d) compassion was present through interaction and integration. These themes were also consistent with the findings from Chapter 2 of this study. The data gathered from course documents surfaced themes of (a) the textbook author's definition of compassionate leadership varied with the faculty and student participants' interpretations, (b) compassion was present through interaction and integration, and (c) students developed compassion through experiential learning. These themes supported the research findings from Chapter 2 of this study. These common themes were in Chapter 2 and the course documents analysis results. Accordingly, Chapter 5 evaluates the results, offers implications, and provides recommendations based on this research study.

Chapter 5: Synthesis and Discussion

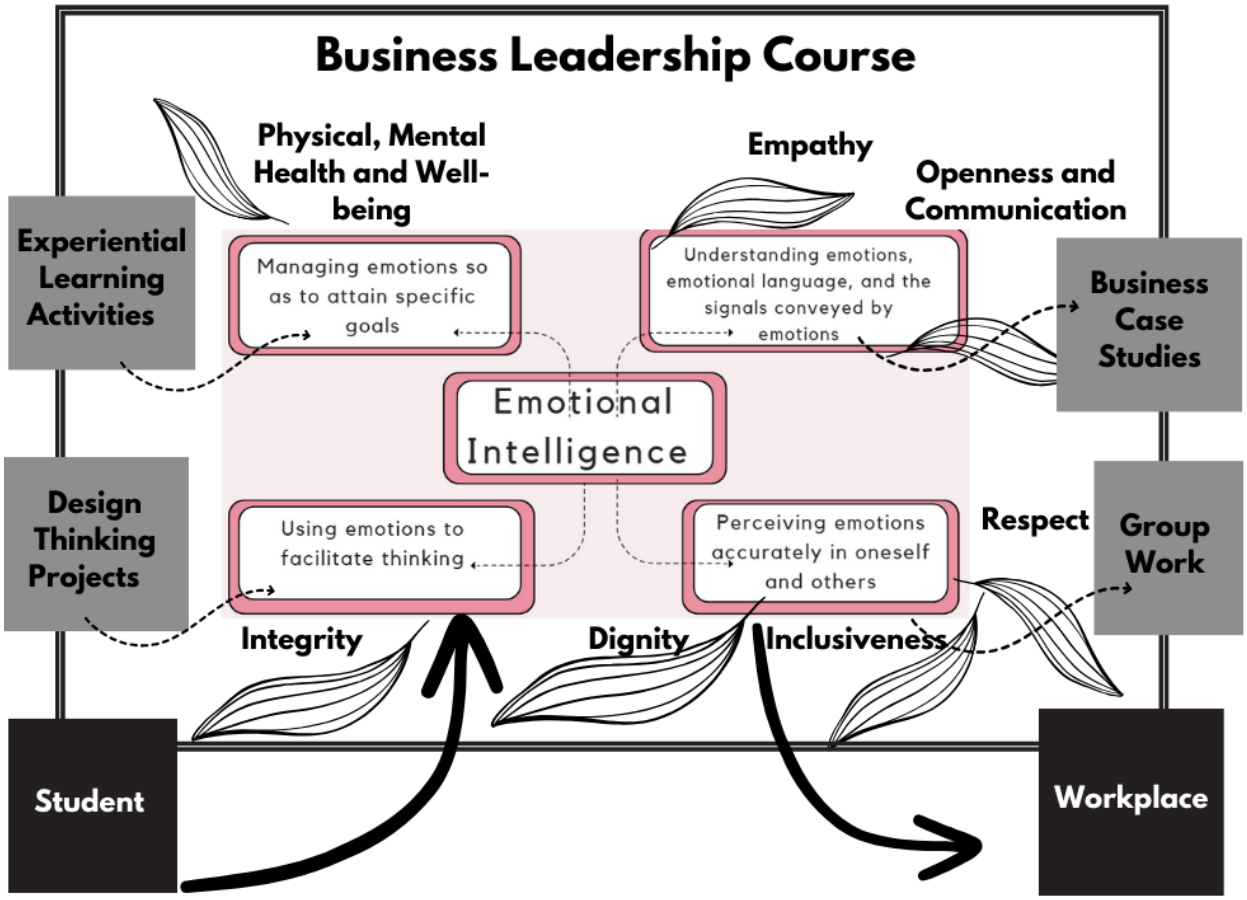
This chapter discusses the qualitative case study's findings in juxtaposition with the case study's research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework. The discussion section provides a detailed interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the research findings. In addition, the discussion section examines the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings and revisits the study's limitations. The researcher also discusses the transferability of the study's findings to broader populations and other settings and conditions. Lastly, additional limitations are considered.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides a detailed interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the case study's findings. The researcher looked for developing patterns in the study's data and evaluated whether the study's research question, literature review, and conceptual framework aligned and strengthened their explanations. In addition, this section discusses the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings. The purpose of this qualitative case study sought to understand what elements, if any, of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills, which led to the creation of the following research question: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills? J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of emotional intelligence (EI) was connected with the Ramachandran et al. (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership to form the study's conceptual framework (see Figure 4) to function as the groundwork for this study.

Figure 4

Conceptual Model: Compassionate Leadership Skill Development


Business Leadership Course
Physical, Mental Health and Well-being
Empathy
Openness and Communication
Experiential Learning Activities
Managing emotions so as to attain specific goals
Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions
Business Case Studies
Emotional Intelligence
Design Thinking Projects
Using emotions to facilitate thinking
Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others
Respect
Group Work
Integrity
Dignity
Inclusiveness
Student
Workplace

Note. Adapted from "What is Emotional Intelligence?," by J. D. Mayer & P. Salovey, in P. Salovey & D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications* (pp. 3–34), 1997, Basic Books. Copyright 1997 by Basic Books. Adapted with permission (see Appendix A).

This chapter synthesizes the major findings of qualitative data collected from (a) three course observations (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3) of the 90 undergraduate business leadership students, (b) two interviews with the faculty participants teaching the undergraduate business leadership course, and (c) five interviews with student participants enrolled in the undergraduate business leadership course. To corroborate the interviews and classroom observations, a document analysis of the course syllabi, textbook, and two extra credit reflection assignments were conducted using the study's conceptual model: compassionate leadership skill development (see Figure 4) in relation to the theoretical framework. A study's credibility, strength, and range of understanding can be confirmed by triangulation from multiple data sources (Billups, 2021). The first component (i.e., *Students can learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities*; see top-left box in Figure 1) was found in all three data collection sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis). The second component (i.e., *Students can learn to understand emotions through problem-based learning activities*; see top-right box in Figure 1) was discovered through observation and interviews. The third component (i.e., *Students can learn essential interpersonal skills through groupwork*; see bottom-right box in Figure 1) was exposed through the observations and interviews. Lastly, the fourth component (i.e., *Students use emotions to facilitate thinking when participating in design thinking projects*; see bottom-left box in Figure 1) was revealed through all three data collection sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis). The four components are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Students Learned to Manage Emotions Through Experiential Learning Activities

Data collection of the three data collection sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis) revealed that students learned to manage emotions through experiential learning activities, such as volunteering, charitable giving exercises, and diversity seminars (see top-left box in Figure 1). This finding corroborates early research, where business scholars found that EI can be embedded in applied in-class activities as a technique to increase students' intercultural communication aptitudes in preparation for future international professional interactions (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017). During Dr. Fleming's class (i.e., Observation 1), the students participated in an experiential learning activity focusing on in-groups vs. out-groups in work settings. The students applied compassionate leadership strategies, such as showing empathy and listening, to improve communication. They discussed other strategies, such as helping nongroup members feel included by giving them a voice to feel empowered to act and contribute, showing concern strategy, and creating special relationships and connections. This finding is further supported by previous research findings that leaders with higher levels of EI are more likely to notice cues and trends, build stronger relationships with stakeholders, and are more dedicated to improving the organization's relational structure (Konig et al., 2020).

The current study also revealed that students can build EI and compassionate leadership skills when participating in volunteer activities. The student interview participants provided multiple recommendations for activities and curricular assignments for students to develop compassionate leadership skills, such as volunteering and attending university e-board meetings. This recommendation was supported by previous findings from researchers who have uncovered that when undergraduate students learn self-compassion and self-esteem skill development techniques in the classroom and participate in community service activities, they have higher levels of empathy and compassion; their well-being, mental health states, and learning performance are positively impacted; and their anxiety levels are lowered (Lavery & Sandri, 2021; Pandey et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). When students learn compassion, self-compassion, and self-esteem techniques in the classroom and through community service activities, the techniques help support them with their academics, contributing to their postgraduate workplace success. The development of compassion and self-esteem techniques is a long-term gain, where students develop these skills as students, which can be used later in their careers. When students learn compassionate leadership skills and develop their EI skills, it is a lifelong benefit to the students and their future employers.

Another example of how compassionate leadership and EI skill development was built into the curriculum was shared during Dr. Fleming's interview when she discussed how she saw a strong connection between intercultural communication and compassionate leadership. Dr. Fleming further shared she envisioned an intentionally designed course dedicated to intercultural competence. Students' academic success and workplace performance are positively affected by their development of intercultural communication skills, such as empathy, intercultural awareness, and intercultural business communication skills, in the classroom. These techniques prepare students to work with other students from diverse backgrounds, training them to work with diverse teams later in their careers. Past business education researchers have also found that diversity training has a positive influence on empathy, intercultural business communication, and intercultural awareness, and these skills allow students to demonstrate enthusiasm, which makes them more inclined to use alternative cultural business communication methods by applying altruism and compassion when making business decisions (Cochran & Weaver, 2017; Pedersen & Hammond, 2021; Wang Guénier, 2020).

Through the document analysis of the course textbook, the researcher uncovered organizational initiatives, such as diversity training, that leaders can implement to fuel compassion throughout the organization. (DuBrin, 2019). The current study builds on findings by Callister and Plante (2017), which indicated students who participate in diversity training have higher levels of compassion. The Callister and Plante (2017) study revealed that when students participate in diversity training, they develop empathy, intercultural business communication skills, and intercultural awareness, which could positively impact their academic success and further influence their postgraduate success and workplace performance. Through the student and faculty interviews, course observations, and document analysis, the findings in this study supported the idea that undergraduate business faculty could update the current leadership curriculum to ensure modern attributes are embedded into core learning outcomes by providing students with opportunities to learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities, like volunteerism and diversity training.

Students Learned to Understand Emotions Through Problem-Based Learning Activities

Data collection through the student and faculty interviews and the course observations revealed students learned to understand emotions and their signals by building openness, communication skills, and empathy through problem-based learning activities. Drury-Grogan and Russ (2013) discovered that students build business communication skills through collaborative experiential learning activities, such as simulations and case studies, allowing them to apply business communication concepts. The student and faculty interview participants identified problem-based learning activities connected to real-world business problems, such as in-class discussions, case studies, guest speakers, hypothetical leadership scenarios, and student interviews with leaders, allowing students to develop communication skills and empathy.

Article Analysis and In-Depth Group Discussions Helped Students Learn to Understand Emotions. The current study’s findings revealed students learned to understand emotions by reading current business articles and having in-depth group discussions surrounding the material. For example, Professor Bell (i.e., Observations 2 and 3) created a problem-based activity by sharing a recent article about the rising trend among U.S. companies struggling to encourage employees to return to the office after working remotely after the COVID-19 global pandemic. Professor Bell encouraged students to consider the scenario and share techniques and incentives employers might offer their employees to return to the office. The current study's finding that students learned to understand emotions through problem-based learning activities supports research by Drury-Grogan and Russ (2013), who found that when students participate in engaging group discussions, it deepens their learning process, helps them learn to work with others, teaches them how to be professionally poised, guides them on how to build on their communication skills, and provides them with the opportunity to apply business communication ideologies. In addition, Professor Bell's guest speaker (i.e., Observations 2 and 3) integrated elements of compassion in their presentations to the students by pulling from examples of using EI with their employees in organizational settings, another problem-based learning activity discovery. This finding is supported by another discovery made by Drury-Grogan and Russ (2013), who determined business students learn from guest presenters by stepping into senior executives' roles and learning to understand the real-world challenges that executives encounter. Students can learn to understand emotions by reading current business articles, participating in group discussions, and learning from real-life organizational leaders.

Engaging in Class Activities Helped Students Learn to Understand Emotions. The current study uncovered that in-class activities, such as instructor-led structured exercises, helped students learn to understand emotions. The researcher observed the students during Dr. Fleming's class (i.e., Observation 1) participating in an engaging in-class activity focusing on in- and out-group situations in professional settings. This finding aligns with a discovery made by Rider et al. (2018) that business leadership faculty who implement course elements such as in-class discussions and case study analysis, focusing on an organization's shared vision and employee well-being rooted in humanistic values in the curriculum, help students build compassionate leadership skills. In addition, this finding aligns with the Fall et al. (2013) discovery that applied learning opportunities for students, such as structured in-class activities, help students focus on the benefits of EI and its importance to the labor market and the identification of EI strategies for conflict negotiation can provide business students with opportunities to develop emotional and social intelligence competencies. The structured in-class activity, led by Dr. Fleming, allowed the students to understand emotions and to build communication and empathy skills.

Case Study Analysis Helped Students Learn to Understand Emotions. The current study detected that case studies offered students an opportunity to consider the diverse perspectives of individuals from a global organization. This finding is supported by prior research by Ortiz and Huber-Heim (2017), who discovered problem-based learning activities, such as case studies, allow students to feel a connection to the lived experiences of others across the globe. When students analyze case studies and participate in simulations, they become exposed to varied viewpoints and diverse opinions as they learn about the real-life business decisions made by organizational leaders. For example, during his interview, Professor Bell talked about a case study he wrote with Dr. Fleming, which examines a company with corporate offices in Australia and the United States. Bell shared he discussed intercultural communication strategies in the case study and explained that he used the strategies in his business leadership course. This finding is further supported by Drury-Grogan and Russ (2013), who found case studies assist business students in their learning process, help them learn to work with others, model how to be professionally poised, teach them to build on their communication skills, and provide opportunities to apply business communication ideologies. When students in a business leadership class read case studies, such as Dr. Fleming and Professor Bell's case study, students learn about effective intercultural communication strategies. Students can see first-hand how leaders use EI strategies in response to organizational conflict.

Students Learned Essential Interpersonal Skills Through Groupwork

Data collection through the student and faculty interviews, as well as the course observations, exposed that through group work, students learned essential interpersonal skills they will use in the workplace by understanding how to perceive their emotions and the emotions of others accurately. These techniques and skills prepare students for responding to the needs of others in professional settings, and business faculty created reoccurring collaboration and interaction opportunities for students to build relationships with each other. This finding corroborates with prior research by Worline and Dutton (2022), who found discussion groups and one-on-one activities are pedagogical activities promoting trust and respect. For example, students in Dr. Fleming's class (i.e., Observation 1) worked collaboratively during their in-class activity, focusing on in- and out-group situations in professional settings. Similarly, the guest speaker in Professor Bell's classes (i.e., Observations 2 and 3) talked with the students about the importance of team collaboration and relationship building with peers, superiors, and subordinates. This finding supports previous research that has shown that when instructors build compassionate and inclusive learning environments, it encourages dynamic and broad discussions, promotes activism, and fosters settings where students can share their thoughts without borders (Tallberg et al., 2022; Worline & Dutton, 2022). During the interviews, student and faculty participants identified the usefulness of final team projects for students to build interpersonal skills. During Observation 1, Dr. Fleming allowed students to socialize quietly after completing their in-class activity while they waited for the other groups to complete the assignment. The student interview participants also recommended additional social interaction opportunities during in-class discussions. Students can build interpersonal skills when they work in groups and casually socialize with their peers.

Students Used Emotions to Facilitate Thinking When Participating in Design Thinking Projects

Data collection of the three data collection sources (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis) revealed that in design thinking projects, such as compassion training, the learning of peer coaching techniques and active listening skills, and taking emotional and social competence assessments, students used their emotions to facilitate thinking.

Students Used Emotions to Facilitate Thinking When Participating in Peer Coaching Activities. Data collection revealed that by learning peer coaching methods, students used their emotions to facilitate thinking. This finding corroborates research by Taylor and Boyatzis (2012), which found that peer coaching with compassion increases student engagement and learning, and when students learn active listening skills and basic coaching techniques, they become more engaged and create bonds with their classmates by discovering their ideal selves and personal assets. In addition, the researcher observed that students in the courses (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3) developed peer coaching techniques when they participated in role-playing activities. These techniques and skills helped students build their EI levels, so they were equipped to respond to the needs of others.

Students Used Emotions to Facilitate Thinking Through EI Training and Assessments. The faculty interview participants reported they perceived the theories and concepts they covered in their business leadership course included the development of EI skills. They saw EI in students' examples, and EI surfaced through the leader interviews and personal experiences students shared in class. This finding is supported by previous research, which discovered that with the growth of global business, business faculty are currently researching methods to prepare business students for professional social interactions, and EI training can prepare students for future global business dealings (Draper-Clarke, 2020; Fall et al., 2013; Ramsey et al. 2014). In addition, research has supported the idea that EI training can assist an individual with advancing compassion, empathy, and the prosocial lens of the economy (Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2013; Fall et al., 2013; Konecki, 2017; Sinclair & Saklofske, 2019). During the course observations, the researcher also observed the discussions led by the guest speaker from Professor Bell's class (i.e., Observations 2 and 3) about the importance of administering EI assessments and EI training for employees and managers in professional settings, as well as the use of executive coaching and consultants to help leaders build EI skills. The finding reflects similar discoveries by previous researchers, such as how short-term compassion training positively affects a leader's performance and work engagement (Van Oosten et al., 2019; Weng et al., 2013). During the document analysis of the course textbook, the researcher uncovered organizational initiatives that leaders can implement, such as EI training for employees, EI assessments and interviews administered by skilled professionals, 360-degree feedback reviews, the hiring of consultants to assist leaders in developing EI skills in diversity training, and executive coaching to increase compassion and EI throughout the organization (DuBrin, 2019).

Furthermore, as in the current study, business scholars have found that EI skill development can be embedded in applied in-class activities as a technique to increase students' intercultural communication aptitudes in preparation for future international professional interactions (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017). The three data collections (i.e., observations, interviews, and document analysis) revealed that by learning peer coaching methods and EI training and assessments, students had the opportunity to use their emotions to facilitate thinking. The study's credibility, strength, and range of understanding can be confirmed by triangulation from the multiple qualitative data sources and is discussed further in relation to the study's limitations in the next section (Billups, 2021).

Discussion of Unanticipated Findings

In addition to the study's findings that aligned with its conceptual model, the researcher uncovered unanticipated discoveries during the qualitative case study. This section discusses these findings.

Faculty Recommended the Adoption of Compassionate Leadership by Higher Education Institutions

During interviews, faculty acknowledged that a higher education institution's academic dean needs to support compassionate leadership as a leadership strategy. They identified that faculty members in Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and Master in Leadership programs are more likely to cover compassionate leadership concepts. They also recommended compassionate leadership as an elective for all undergraduate business students. The current study's finding for the adoption of compassionate leadership by higher education institutions supports research by Waddington (2021) that higher education institutions, where students are at the center of the organization, can foster a compassionate culture through interpersonal connections and intersectional compassionate curricula, and can assist students in the learning process. Furthermore, Waddington (2018) found that care, kindness, and compassion are components of professionalism and essential skills used in the office; thus, compassion is a concern in higher education. For a compassionate culture to be cultivated, leaders of higher education institutions need to collectively adopt this methodology and infuse compassion into their leadership practices (Waddington, 2018). For students to learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses, the idea must be adopted by faculty, department chairs, and deans of business schools.

Faculty Used Compassionate Teaching Methods

During the course observations, the researcher observed compassionate teaching methods, such as the instructor's creation of a comfortable classroom environment and recognition of students' needs when the researcher observed the three leadership courses. This finding is supported by Hamilton and Petty's (2023) discovery that compassionate teachers assist students by helping them use their strengths to grow their own competencies. Compassionate teachers also include components of universal design in their curriculum, which increase students' flexibility to access course material, eventually maximizing students' learning potential (Hamilton & Petty, 2023). The faculty participants used time during the in-class activity to check in with individual students about assignments, questions, and other items. The faculty participants also allowed students to socialize quietly after completing their in-class activity while they waited for the other groups to complete the assignment. This finding is further supported by a discovery made by Dutton and Worline (2020), who found that compassionate educators become physically present for their students by allowing them to request individualized appointments.

Furthermore, professors can be gracious with their perceptions of student situations, allow their students flexibility, and halt their opinion of students by communicating that they care by including routine messages to the class through course delivery systems (Dutton & Worline, 2020). The current study's finding of the faculty's use of compassionate teaching methods is supported by previous discoveries made by scholars that business faculty can create compassionate and inclusive learning environments that inspire dynamic and broad conversations, promote social responsibility, and support environments where students can share their thoughts without boundaries (Hamilton et al., 2022; Worline & Dutton, 2022). Faculty must be trained in compassionate teaching methods to create collective compassion in the classroom for students to learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses, which students will carry with them to the workforce.

Faculty Had the Tools to Assess Students' Compassionate Leadership Skills

During the interviews, the faculty participants identified methods professors can use to assess whether students' compassion and empathy levels as leaders increase because of the curriculum and teaching. For example, faculty participants recognized the course's final project as an example. The faculty participants explained students received real business scenarios and leadership issues, and they were challenged with creating solutions; the assignment provided the faculty with a view of the students' perspectives. In addition, students participated in live leader interviews, which provided another point of reference compared to research alone. Findings in the current study are supported by a discovery made by Gialamas et al. (2020) that high-quality and engaging activities assessed by faculty can better prepare students for leadership roles. Faculty participants acknowledged they could assess the students' levels of knowledge to gauge how well students understood the components, approach, behaviors, challenges, and skills. Faculty could also measure students' compassionate leadership skill development based on the student's attempt and level of effort. Faculty participants further added that instructors should be able to measure if the students are participating fully in a class role play or if the student can understand what was difficult about the role-play exercise or explain why it failed. The faculty participants described the process, which began with engagement and ended with assessment, where the students apply the course concepts in a real setting, such as in their jobs or in their sports teams, and then could be assessed on their written reflections. The faculty participants recommended students deconstruct the scenario's outcome using critical-thinking skills and advised faculty could also include questions from the experiences from class for the exam. This finding is further supported by research by Worline and Dutton (2022), who found that when instructors thoughtfully review assignments and provide constructive feedback, they show empathy for students' well-being and success. When courses are embedded in compassion, students are more likely to engage with others. Faculty must be able to assess whether students have developed compassionate leadership skills for students to learn and master compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses.

The Textbook Author's Definition of Compassionate Leadership Varied With the Faculty and Student Participants' Interpretations

During both the student and faculty interviews and document analyses, the researcher discovered variances and inconsistencies between the textbook author's definition of compassionate leadership and the faculty and student participants' interpretations. During the interviews with the faculty participants, the researcher asked them to define compassionate leadership in their own words. Dr. Fleming defined compassionate leadership as "a leadership approach that places employees' needs at the forefront of business performance. It considers the social–emotional needs of the employees and the interpersonal needs in the workplace and adjusts and offers allowances where someone has specific needs." Professor Bell defined compassionate leadership by anchoring his response to his over 30 years of experience in the corporate world, drawing from his professional recollection. He described compassionate leadership as "developing one's employees and showing one's staff that they are committed to their development."

During the interviews with the student participants, the researcher provided them with the study's definition of a compassionate leader, which describes an individual who displays behaviors and demeanors such as empathetic concern, altruism, sagacity, reliability, understanding, responsibility, truthfulness, charisma, pride, self-care, and self-growth in response to helping others to pursue their goals and relating to their advancement (Ramachandran et al., 2023). After providing the student participants with the study's definition of a compassionate leader, the researcher asked the student participants to provide their definitions. Emily described a compassionate leader as "an individual that creates a comfortable and relaxed work environment while ensuring productivity. Compassionate leaders maintain a balance between creating a calm work environment in a productive work setting." In her extra credit student reflection assignment, Rory described compassionate leadership as "emotionally intelligent behavior, such as relationship building, understanding employees, and connecting on a personal level are important characteristics compassionate leaders need to be successful." Rory further illustrated a compassionate leader as being "empathetic about one's struggles and inspires respect and is perceived as competent because of the trust they inspire." Lane illustrated a compassionate leader as "someone who takes care of employees, he carves out of his personal time to ensure that his employees are developing personally and professionally." Madeline depicted a compassionate leader as an "empathetic leader who is aware of the multigenerational workforce." Louise described a compassionate leader as someone who will "follow up their statements and commitments with action, provide structure for their employees, are open to questions, reduce the stress levels of their employees, by helping them maintain a work-life balance.” In her extra credit student reflection assignment, Louise further explained that compassionate leadership “is about showing empathy for others and actively listening to their concerns or ideas.”

The textbook’s author illustrated the two actions that are essential when leading compassionately: “The individual must create a setting where impacted employees can freely share their feelings, and the leader must also create an environment where employees who experience distress can find a technique to ease their own suffering” (DuBrin, 2019, p. 132). The current study yielded two definitions of compassionate leadership from the faculty participants, five definitions of compassionate leadership from the student participants, and one definition of compassionate leadership from the textbook’s author, resulting in eight various and unique definitions with some overlap with the study’s definition of compassionate leadership.

Limitations

This section revisits the study’s limitations, discusses the transferability of the study’s findings to broader populations and other settings and conditions, and shares additional limitations. This study included multiple limitations. The first limitation was the possibility that the researcher omitted participants’ interpretations of curricula. The subject matter may have room for interpretation, so the participants’ subjectivity to the content matter was limited. Qualitative researchers acknowledge the presence of biases and subjectivity, but minimizing their impact on the research process and findings can still be challenging. This limitation was controlled by pilot testing and data triangulation (Bowen, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The second limitation was the variation among research participants’ definitions of compassionate leadership. The participants might have defined and conceptualized it differently and explained how someone receives, learns, and develops compassionate leadership differently. To offset this situation, the researcher provided the student participants with the study's definition of compassionate leadership.

The third limitation involved the possibility of low generalizability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). More specifically, a different researcher examining a different course and another group of students could generate varying results. The small sample size of the qualitative case study prevented its generalizability. However, the researcher used transferability as an external validity tool, allowing them to generalize and apply the study's findings to similar settings, populations, or circumstances (Billups, 2021). The reader can determine the appropriateness of the qualitative case study by evaluating the detailed narratives and descriptions provided by the multiple layers of data when applied to other settings (Billups, 2021). The study's credibility, strength, and range of understanding were confirmed by triangulation from multiple qualitative data sources (Billups, 2021). By finding codes and themes in multiple qualitative data sources, the researcher triangulated the information and presented validity in their conclusions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher corroborated codes through cross validation, and categories were converged through multiple data sources (Suter, 2012). The researcher ensured reliability by using a case study protocol and creating a case study database to maintain the collected data in an extractable way (Yin, 2018).

Summary

For this qualitative case study, the researcher used multiple procedures and replication logic to ensure the accuracy of the findings, which confirmed the study's credibility and dependability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Terrell, 2023). This research exhibited insights into which undergraduate business leadership course components prepared students to be future compassionate leaders. More specifically, this study highlighted components of undergraduate business leadership courses, such as compassionate leadership skills development through experiential learning activities (e.g., volunteerism) that help students build compassionate leadership skills. The findings identified course components, such as problem-based learning activities, that helped students learn to understand emotions. The study also revealed that students in business leadership courses learned to understand emotions and their signals by building openness and communication skills, and empathy through problem-based learning activities, such as case study analysis or simulation-based learning assessments. Lastly, the findings exhibited that when students worked in teams, such as during a final team project, they learned essential interpersonal skills they will use in the workplace by understanding how to perceive their emotions and the emotions of others. This chapter joined and reviewed the qualitative case study's findings in connection with the case study's research question, literature review, and conceptual framework. The discussion section provided a detailed interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the case study's findings. In addition, the discussion section examined the credibility and trustworthiness of the study's findings and revisited the study's limitations. The researcher also discussed the transferability of the study's findings to broader populations and other settings and conditions and considered additional limitations. Chapter 6, the last chapter in this qualitative case study, includes concluding statements, recommendations for future practice and research, and a capstone project presentation.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Capstone

This chapter interprets the study's findings, offers recommendations for professors in practice, communicates recommendations for future research, and presents the study's capstone. The study's capstone was created to tackle the problem of practice, which is to encourage undergraduate business programs to evaluate their current business leadership curriculum to ensure compassionate leadership topics are woven into the core learning outcomes. The findings support previous literature that unearthed the need to revise the existing framework of undergraduate business education and its effect on students and their future leadership styles (Aksoy et al., 2019; Friedman & Gerstein, 2017; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Undergraduate business educators can provide more opportunities for business students to develop soft skills, such as compassion in classrooms, if they revise outdated business curriculum with modern-day business topics (Worline & Dutton, 2022). To ensure business students build compassionate leadership skills in their coursework, faculty should consider including experiential learning, problem-based learning, groupwork, and design thinking projects to assist students with developing these essential skills required for a modern global labor market.

Conclusions

J. D. Mayer and Salovey's (1997) four-branch model of emotional intelligence (EI) was combined with Ramachandran et al.'s (2023) six significant elements of compassionate leadership to form the study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1). The framework aligns with the findings from qualitative data collected from faculty and student interviews, observations, and document analysis. The researcher gathered the components of a business leadership course that assisted students in developing compassionate leadership skills.

Students Can Learn to Manage Emotions Through Experiential Learning Activities

Based on data collected during interviews with the students, the course observations, and the document analysis of the course textbook, students in business leadership courses can learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities, such as volunteering and attending university student association meetings, and learning about intercultural communication through diversity seminars. Dr. Fleming further added to the conversation, “If individuals develop intercultural competence, they, by default, have compassion because they see the situation from the other person’s perspective.” Business scholars have discovered that EI can be imbedded in applied in-class activities as a technique to increase students’ intercultural communications in preparation for future international professional interactions (Andrade, 2021; Corrales et al., 2021; Fall et al., 2013; Frank, 2017). Students build their empathy and compassion levels by learning compassion, self-compassion, and self-esteem techniques when they participate in community service activities. Emily, a student interview participant elaborated, “Volunteering with children could help students learn compassionate leadership skills”. These skills prepare students to work with others from diverse backgrounds. The experiential learning activities ultimately help equip students for successful careers by allowing students to hone the necessary skills to communicate effectively with others in a global marketplace.

Students Can Learn to Understand Emotions Through Problem-Based Learning Activities

The researcher uncovered, through the course observations and faculty and student interviews, that students in business leadership courses can learn to understand emotions and their signals by building openness and communication skills and empathy through problem-based learning activities, such as case study analysis and simulation-based learning assessments. Problem-based learning activities connected students in the study to real-world business problems through in-class discussions, guest speakers, hypothetical leadership scenarios, and student interviews with leaders. Professor Bell, contributed to the conversation, “Applied learning activities connected to real-world business problems are techniques faculty can use to include compassionate leadership qualities in the classroom.” Problem-based learning activities assist business students in their learning process, help them learn to work with others, teach them how to be professionally poised, provide them with techniques on how to build on their communication skills, and provide opportunities to apply business communication ideologies (Drury-Grogan & Russ, 2013). Lane, a student interview participant explained, “Listening to business leaders present in class is a beneficial in-class activity, which help students become self-aware.” The students built their empathy and compassion levels by learning to understand emotions by participating in problem-based learning activities. These applied academic experiences allowed students to step into real leaders’ shoes, and to follow and observe their compassionate actions and decisions. The students can apply these strategies to future organizational decisions.

Students Can Learn Essential Interpersonal Skills Through Groupwork

Based on the data collected during course observations and student and faculty interviews, when working in teams, students can learn essential interpersonal skills they will use in the workplace. By learning techniques and skills on how to perceive one’s own emotions and the emotions of others accurately, students prepare for future responses to the needs of others in professional settings. Business faculty can create reoccurring collaboration and interaction opportunities for students to build relationships with each other through one-on-one activities, in-class discussions, additional opportunities for students to have social interactions, and final team projects, as a method for students to build interpersonal skills. Professor Bell further contributed to the conversation, “I strive to weave compassion into the curriculum as a method to prepare students to work in teams. I believe that when students work in teams, they learn to be more compassionate.” Students working collaboratively during in-class activities and participating in discussion groups and one-on-one activities are pedagogical activities that promote trust and respect (Worline & Dutton, 2022). Students, during the observations, learned essential interpersonal skills through groupwork when participating in the course’s final team projects. Groupwork allows students to develop valuable interpersonal skills they will use throughout their academic careers, and into their professional lives.

Students Use Emotions to Facilitate Thinking When Participating in Design Thinking Projects

The researcher discovered, through the observations, faculty interviews, and the document analysis of the course textbook, that students use their emotions to facilitate thinking during design thinking projects, such as compassion training, the learning of peer coaching techniques and active listening skills, and by completing EI and intercultural competence assessments and interviews administered by skilled professionals. Students in Dr. Fleming’s class used their emotions to facilitate thinking when they participated in a design thinking project. In their extra credit assignments, both Rory and Louise discussed how they developed compassionate leadership skills during an in-class activity by applying compassionate leadership strategies, such as showing empathy and listening to improve communication. By participating in the role-playing activity, the students developed peer coaching techniques. These techniques and skills helped students build their EI levels so they were equipped to respond to the needs of others. Students, during the observations, also used their feelings when they shared professional examples with each other, and when they listened to live leader interviews. In addition, students can further use their emotions to assist in thinking when they complete EI assessments and participate in EI training. When business students learn in their leadership classrooms about the various techniques to use emotions to facilitate thinking (e.g., EI assessments and interviews administered by skilled professionals, 360-degree feedback reviews, hiring consultants to assist leaders in developing EI skills and diversity training, contracting executive coaches), they can consider implementing these methods for future employees later in their careers to funnel compassion throughout their organizations. The guest speaker during observations 2 and 3 further explained, “Goleman’s (2019) book on EI book and EI assessments helped me and my staff learn EI skills and how to apply the techniques in a business setting.” EI training opportunities prepare students for future professional social interactions and global business dealings; thus, they will have a positive impact on their work performance and work engagement.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings presented, the researcher suggests four recommendations for policy and practice.

Recommendation 1: Higher Education Institutions Should Adopt Compassionate Leadership in Their Business Leadership Curriculum

Faculty, department chairs, and deans of business schools should recognize, support, and advocate for students’ development of compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses as a way to prepare students for successful and fulfilling careers in an evolving global labor market. During interviews, faculty acknowledged that a higher education institution’s academic dean needs to be in the background and supportive of compassionate leadership in the business leadership curriculum. Faculty participants further recommended an elective course dedicated to compassionate leadership offered for all undergraduate business students. A compassionate culture in a higher education setting can be fostered when students are at the center of the organization. The compassionate culture can be developed and maintained through interpersonal connections and intersectional compassionate curricula. Care, kindness, and compassion are components of professionalism and essential skills used in the workforce; thus, compassion is a concern in the realm of higher education. The adoption of compassionate leadership by higher education institutions in their business leadership curriculum is a concern for higher education because one collective goal of higher education institutions is to prepare students for the workforce. For a compassionate culture to be cultivated, leaders of higher education institutions need to cooperatively adopt this mindset and infuse compassion into their leadership practices. It is important for faculty, department chairs, and deans of business schools to adopt this idea so students can learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses.

Recommendation 2: Faculty Should Adopt Compassionate Teaching Methods

Faculty must be trained in compassionate teaching methods for students to develop compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses. During the course observations, the researcher observed compassionate teaching methods, such as the instructor's creation of a comfortable classroom environment and recognizing students' needs. Compassionate teachers assist students in recognizing their personal strengths to grow their competencies and include components of universal design for learning to increase flexibility for students in both accessing course material and in the demonstration of their learning (Hamilton & Petty, 2023). The faculty used time during the in-class activity to check in with individual students about assignments, questions, and other items. Faculty also allowed students to socialize quietly after completing their in-class activity while they waited for the other groups to complete the assignment. Compassionate educators become physically present for their students by allowing them to request individualized appointments (Dutton & Worline, 2020). Professors can also be gracious with their perceptions of student situations, allow their students flexibility, and halt their opinion of students by communicating they care, such as including routine messages to the class through course delivery systems (Dutton & Worline, 2020). Lastly, business faculty can create compassionate and inclusive learning environments that inspire dynamic and broad conversations, promote social responsibility, and support environments where students can share their thoughts without boundaries (Tallberg et al., 2022; Worline & Dutton, 2022). Faculty must be trained in compassionate teaching methods for students to learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses.

Recommendation 3: Improve Faculty Assessment of Students' Compassionate Leadership Skills

The only way faculty can accurately measure whether students develop compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses is to provide them access to the necessary academic tools to assess the students' growth in these competencies. For example, professors can assess whether students' compassion and empathy levels as leaders increase because of the curriculum and teaching during the course's final project. The faculty can also have a view of the students' perspectives when students are given real business scenarios and leadership issues and they are challenged with creating solutions. High-quality and engaging activities that faculty can assess better prepare students for leadership roles (Gialamas et al., 2020). During the interviews, the faculty acknowledged they could assess the students' levels of knowledge to gauge how well they understood the components, approach, behaviors, challenges, and skills. Faculty also shared they would measure students' compassionate leadership skill development based on the student's attempt and level of effort. Faculty further added that instructors should be able to measure if the students are participating fully in a class role play, or if the student can understand what was difficult about the role-play exercise or explain why it failed. The faculty during the interviews also described the process, which begins with engagement and ends with assessment, where the students apply the course concepts in a real setting, such as in their jobs or in their sports teams, and then could be assessed on their written reflections. The faculty recommended students deconstruct the scenario's outcome using critical-thinking skills and advised that faculty could also include questions from the experiences from class for the exam. When instructors thoughtfully review assignments and provide constructive feedback, they show empathy for students' well-being and success, and when courses are embedded with compassion, students are more likely to engage with others (Worline & Dutton, 2022). Faculty must be able to assess whether students have developed compassionate leadership skills for students to learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses.

Recommendation 4: Adopt a Universal Definition of Compassionate Leadership

During student and faculty interviews, the document analysis of the course textbook, and student extra credit reflection assignments, the researcher discovered variances and inconsistencies between the textbook author's definition of compassionate leadership and the faculty and students' interpretations. The grey area surrounding an established and universal definition of compassionate leadership could be cleared with the development of a universal definition adopted by organizations and higher education institutions throughout the world. The United Nations would be an appropriate entity to create the universal definition of compassionate leadership. The United Nations met in 2015 and developed a 15-year plan establishing 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) for humans and the planet, measuring progress to 2030. One of their first priorities was to update and redefine the U.N. definition of progress and reposition compassion as the main focus of the SDGs (Grant et al., 2022). Several SDGs align with compassionate leadership, including no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, increased peace and justice, and strong institutions (United Nations, n.d.-b). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) declared compassion intentionally comes together to alleviate suffering and nurture human flourishing (Grant et al., 2022). The revised definition of progress, with a heightened emphasis on compassion, is fundamental to the purpose of the SDGs. The new definition is a reference tool that can help organizations recognize how to convert compassion into action by using the SDGs in response to solving world issues. It would benefit humankind if the United Nations gathered again to meet to create a worldwide definition of compassionate leadership. This universal definition could be adopted and implemented by organizations and higher education institutions worldwide.

Revised definition for Compassionate Leadership. The researcher proposed their definition for compassionate leadership below, based on the multiple definitions provided by the student and faculty participants during the interviews.

A ***compassionate leader*** *is an individual who focuses on the development and needs of others by instilling trust, by providing empathetic care, and by building personal connections.*

The researcher's proposed definition was created by entering the faculty and student participants' definitions of compassionate leadership into a word cloud generator (See Appendix N). The researcher views the collective definition as a starting point to encourage further discussion toward the crafting of a universally adopted definition.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this qualitative case study, the researcher suggests four areas for future research.

Recommendation 1: Replicate This Study With Other Institutions

This case study aimed to examine what components, if any, of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The researcher specifically collected data from faculty and students from three courses at a 4-year institution located in Massachusetts. Future researchers may consider studying the components of a business leadership course in other geographical regions, at a 4-year public institution, or at a 4-year religious-affiliated institution to examine the generalizability of the study's findings to different institution types and geographical regions. Future studies, where colleges offer more than three sections of business leadership courses, would widen their samples to include more data points (Terrell, 2023). A richer data set would further contribute to the topic.

Recommendation 2: Consider Alternative Research Methodologies

Despite the qualitative case study method being an appropriate research design, it might be helpful to think about another methodology, such as a quantitative experimental research design. The research method would follow a true experimental design, where the students in one section of a business leadership course would learn components of compassionate leadership throughout the semester, (Terrell, 2023). There could be a second section of the business leadership course that does not incorporate specific compassionate leadership components. The data from the experimental and nontreated classes could be compared and analyzed to determine if the students in the experimental course developed compassionate leadership skills.

Recommendation 3: Conduct a Longitudinal Study

Exploring the impact of compassionate leadership skills students developed during their undergraduate business leadership courses and applied to their postgraduate careers may provide additional insight on this topic. More specifically, a follow-up study could be conducted with the participants 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years after this case study to explore their professional paths, the application of compassionate leadership skills in the workplace, and the further development of the skills after graduation. By conducting these follow-up data collections, the researcher can measure the growth and application of compassionate leadership skills longitudinally.

Recommendation 4: Replicate This Study in a Different Discipline

Although the researcher's experience, expertise, and interest lied in the business education realm, the study could be replicated by a different researcher at a different site school in a different discipline, such as health care leadership or education leadership. Students in a leadership course, studying a different discipline and planning to enter industries with different demands and challenges, may yield varying results. Expanding this research to other disciplines, such as health care leadership or education leadership, would add to the body of research.

Capstone: Part I: Faculty Workshop In Compassionate Teaching Methods

Based on the recommendation for practice for faculty to provide students opportunities to develop compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses through compassionate leadership skills development techniques used in the workplace, this study will be used to build both a faculty workshop in compassionate teaching methods (Part I) and an undergraduate compassionate leadership course for undergraduate business students (Part II).

It is important for faculty to be knowledgeable in compassionate teaching methods to create collective compassion in the classroom. The findings from this study guided the proposed faculty workshop on compassionate teaching practices and will also advise educational leaders on future curriculum reform. Though the concept of compassionate teaching methods might be new to educators, they recognize students need opportunities to develop soft skills but find it challenging to incorporate or maintain consistency at the course level (Morin & Willox, 2022). As a result, an introductory hour-long workshop on compassionate teaching methods would help faculty learn about the various components and techniques to guide students compassionately in the undergraduate classroom. An electronic flyer with the workshop information can be shared with faculty through the institutions' email and learning management system (See Appendix O). The introductory workshop would be structured as a guided group discussion, where faculty can reflect upon and discuss the suggested topics uncovered through this qualitative study. The workshop would be followed by a detailed training course for faculty led by an expert on compassionate teaching methods. The faculty workshop in compassionate teaching methods would cover various components unveiled during the study's observations and interviews. For example, faculty will discuss ways they can create a comfortable classroom environment, such as by the instructor's use of students' names while lecturing and the insertion of personal examples into the lecture to bring the curriculum to life. Another way faculty can create a relaxed classroom atmosphere is by the instructor taking the time to walk around the classroom to check in with students during group activities, answering questions about assignments and the activity. The faculty can also converse about the usefulness of individual student nameplates, to be handed out to each student at the beginning of class. The nameplates are then collected at the end of class, where students can write and share thoughts and questions on the back of the nameplate about the day's lesson privately with the intent that the instructor would follow up after class if students noted areas of support or concern. The faculty can also consider during the workshop techniques instructors can provide structured activities throughout the semester involving peer-to-peer group work, where students can freely share and discuss their examples. A conversation regarding methods for faculty to create opportunities for social interactions among students, by encouraging socializing at the beginning and end of the class would also be beneficial. The faculty can also talk about examples of how they can create additional opportunities for social interactions between students and guest speakers by allowing students to ask questions. They can also review approaches to the encouragement of students to share examples from their experience during in-class discussions. Faculty can also discuss the importance for faculty to seek student feedback regarding the course climate through brief surveys throughout the semester. Lastly, the faculty can confer about the value in checking in on students at multiple check-in points throughout the semester, to see how the students are doing.

From this workshop, steered by this qualitative case study, faculty may benefit from this research by gaining strategies and knowledge on incorporating elements of compassionate teaching into their curricula. For a compassionate culture to be cultivated, leaders of higher education institutions need to collectively adopt this methodology and infuse compassion into their teaching practices (Waddington, 2018). For students to learn compassionate leadership skills in business leadership courses, the idea must be adopted and implemented by faculty, department chairs, and deans of business schools. This adoption begins with an introductory workshop for faculty on compassionate teaching methods, and then can be infused throughout the organization with the support from training for faculty led by experts trained in compassionate teaching methods.

Capstone Part II Compassionate Leadership Course for Business Students

The recommended course will be a semester-long 3-credit course offered to business students, spanning 12–14 weeks, depending on the college or university academic calendar (see Appendix M) for the course syllabus). The course's readings will be selected from the compassionate leadership sections identified from the study's document analysis of Dubrin's (2019) textbook: *Leadership: Research findings, practice, and skills*. The guest speaker from Professor Bell's courses recommended Goleman's *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. The researcher selected a revised and more relevant book written by Goleman (2019), *The Emotionally intelligent leader*. The study's findings revealed compassionate leadership skills development techniques used in the workplace, which can also be applied in classroom settings.

During the semester, students will develop compassionate leadership skills through experiential learning activities, such as the reading, analysis, and discussion of business case studies focusing on compassionate leadership. There will be presentations to the class given by compassionate leaders identified by the instructor through their professional network. Students will conduct live interviews with leaders from organizations, where students ask the leader to share what compassionate leadership looks like in their company. Students will write a reflection paper and share their findings with the class. Throughout the semester, students will participate in class discussions using compassionate leadership methods to solve hypothetical leadership scenarios, and practice compassionate leadership role-playing techniques. Other compassionate leadership skills development techniques that can be learned in the workplace, such as using 360-degree feedback reviews, diversity training, and hiring executive coaches to increase compassion and EI throughout the organization, will be covered through instruction and by reading case studies.

Students will complete a final team project and presentation centered on compassionate leadership in a researched organization. Students will participate in nonacademic experiential activities, such as volunteer opportunities and student government board involvement, as a course requirement. Students can attend either several student government board meetings (i.e., subcommittee of their choosing) or volunteer 5 hours at a local nonprofit organization. During the last module of the semester, students will complete an EI assessment through a tool, such as The Emotional Intelligence Training Company's EQ-i 2.0 assessment. The self-report assessment measures 15 EI competencies (i.e., self-regard, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibility, problem solving, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, stress tolerance, and optimism). Students will participate in intercultural competence training and complete the Hammer (2019) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), along with their individualized Intercultural Development Plan (IDP). The IDI's unique algorithm allows organizations to measure students' cross-cultural competence progress (Hammer, 2019). The students will write reflection papers about both assessments and incorporate their personal reflections from the IDI and EI assessments into their personal leadership development plan (PLDP). The PLDP will serve as the final paper for the course, where the student reflects on their own compassionate leadership attitudes and skills.

Summary and Conclusion

Researchers have expressed concerns with the existing framework of undergraduate business education and its effect on students and their future leadership styles. Business schools are not fulfilling their abilities to help future leaders develop the skills required to manage corporate performance and solve social and environmental concerns; thus, business scholars have exhibited growing concerns about the elevated levels of social dominance orientation (SDO) in undergraduate business programs (Aksoy et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2015). On the contrary, there is a significant and positive relationship between compassion for others and positive leadership. When individuals have higher levels of compassion, they are more likely to be compassionate to themselves and others, more likely to be open to receiving compassion from others, and less likely to exhibit socially dominant personality traits (Martin & Bok, 2015; Martin et al., 2015). Corporate leaders and business scholars have agreed that compassionate leadership can be taught in business schools and business curricula can be revised to evolve with societal changes (Friedman & Gerstein, 2017; Tramuto & Corwin, 2022).

This qualitative case study sought to understand what elements, if any, of a business leadership course were designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The researcher collected qualitative data from (a) three course observations of the 90 undergraduate business leadership students (i.e., Observations 1, 2, and 3); (b) two interviews with the faculty participants who taught the undergraduate business leadership course and five interviews with student participants enrolled in the undergraduate business leadership courses; and (c) document analysis of the course syllabi, textbook, and extra credit assignments in relation to the study's conceptual model (i.e., compassionate leadership skill development; see Figure 1).

This study identified four major components of compassionate leadership development in business leadership courses, students can: (a) learn to manage emotions through experiential learning activities, (b) learn to understand emotions through problem-based learning activities,

(c) learn essential interpersonal skills through groupwork, and (d) students can use emotions to facilitate thinking when participating in design thinking projects. The research suggests other faculty could adopt identified course components on compassionate leadership in their courses.

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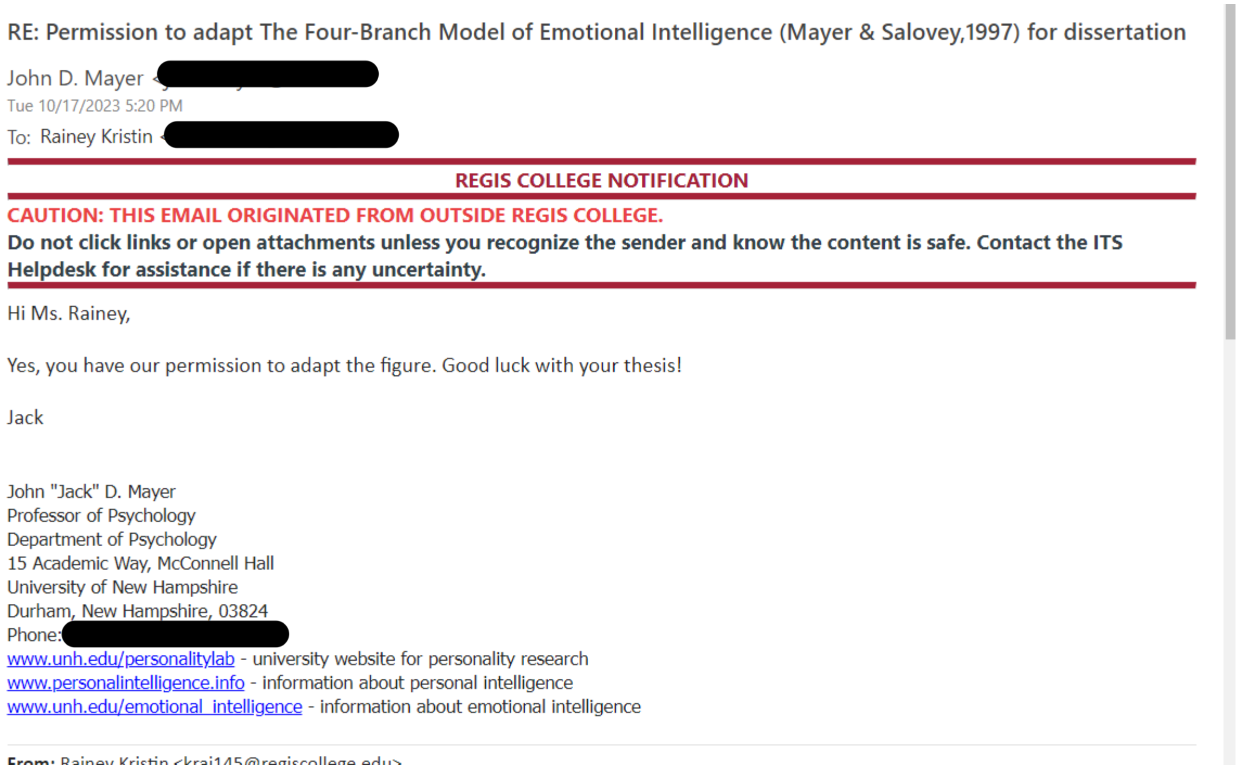
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission to Use the Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence



RE: Permission to adapt The Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey,1997) for dissertation

John D. Mayer [redacted]
Tue 10/17/2023 5:20 PM
To: Rainey Kristin [redacted]

REGIS COLLEGE NOTIFICATION

CAUTION: THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED FROM OUTSIDE REGIS COLLEGE.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Contact the ITS Helpdesk for assistance if there is any uncertainty.

Hi Ms. Rainey,

Yes, you have our permission to adapt the figure. Good luck with your thesis!

Jack

John "Jack" D. Mayer
Professor of Psychology
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15 Academic Way, McConnell Hall
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Phone: [redacted]
www.unh.edu/personalitylab - university website for personality research
www.personalintelligence.info - information about personal intelligence
www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence - information about emotional intelligence

From: Rainey Kristin <krai145@regiscollege.edu>

Appendix B: Semistructured Interview Guide for Faculty (Rainey, 2024)

Qualitative RQ: What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills?

Date: ___________________ Time & Place: ____________________

Interviewer: _________________ Interviewee: ____________________

Setting: ______________________

Pre-Interview Information & Procedures

- **Introduction:** Hello, my name is Kristin Rainey, and I am a student in Regis College's EdD program. Thank you very much for contributing to this study! Our meeting will be one hour, and I will ask you a series of open-ended questions.

Study purpose and applications: This study explores what components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The findings from this study may help improve course design and learning in business leadership courses.

- **Informed Consent Form:** I have already shared the Informed Consent Forms and the study's privacy and protection policies with you. Do you have any questions?

- Before the interview begins, may I answer any questions for you?

Primary Interview Questions

Q1: Please define what compassionate leadership means to you.

Probe: In what ways do you communicate leading with compassion in your teaching?

Probe: Can you provide an example from a lecture?

Probe: Can you provide an example in-class activities, readings, assignments?

Q2: Please describe any professional development that you have had that covered teaching compassionate leadership components within a business leadership course.

Probe: How did you become involved in these experiences/opportunities?

Q3: In what ways can these leadership qualities be taught in the classroom?

Probe: Can you please tell me more?

Q4: What barriers within the business curriculum prevent business faculty from designing and delivering compassionate leadership course components to students?

Q5: How can faculty assess whether students' compassion/empathy as a leader increase as a result of the curriculum/teaching?

Q6: Do you believe that university programs consider compassion as an important contribution that a new graduate brings to the workplace?

Q7: Intercultural competence is defined as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes." How do you think intercultural communication influences one's ability to lead with compassion?

Probe: Can you give me an example?

Closing the Interview

Q8:

Interviewer script: Is there anything else you would like to tell me about compassionate leadership in business leadership courses?

Thank you very much for participating in my research study!

Appendix C: Semistructured Interview Guide for Students (Rainey, 2024)

RQ: What parts of a business leadership course help business students develop compassionate leadership skills?

Date: ____________________ Time & Place: _____________________

Interviewer: __________________ Interviewee: _____________________

Setting: _______________________

- **Introduction:** Hello, my name is Kristin Rainey, and I am a student in Regis College's EdD program. Thank you very much for your time! The length of our meeting will be one hour, and I will be asking you a series of open-ended questions.

- Study purpose and applications: I am exploring what components of a business leadership course help business students develop compassionate leadership skills.

- **Informed Consent Form**: I have already shared with you the Informed Consent Form and the study's privacy and protection policies. Do you have questions about these documents or anything else before we begin?

- **Other questions or concerns?** Before the interview begins, may I answer any questions for you?

Primary Interview Questions

Q1: What qualities do you value in a leader?

Probe: Why are these qualities important in a leader?

Definition of Compassionate Leadership

Compassionate leadership is described as "a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth" (Ramachandran et al., 2023, p. 55).

Q2: Do you know a leader that fits this definition? Tell me about them?

Probe: What are the qualities they possess that make them a 'compassionate' leader?

Q3: What are you learning in your business leadership course related to compassionate leaders or compassionate leadership?

Q4: How is this curriculum teaching you to lead with compassion or to be a future leader with compassionate leadership qualities?

Probe: Can you give examples of in-class activities, readings, assignments, or course outcomes that allow you to develop compassion and empathy?

Q5: What are you not learning in this class related to Compassionate Leadership that you wish you were?

Probe: How will learning this support your Compassionate Leadership development?

Follow-up question: If you can't learn it in the classroom, where/how can you learn it (such as from peers, or through jobs/internships)?

Closing the Interview

Q6: **Interviewer script:** Is there anything else you would like to tell me about compassionate leadership?

Thank you very much for participating in my research study!

Appendix D: Observation Protocol Guide (Rainey, 2024)

Date:	Location:
Course title:	Faculty name:
Length of observation:	Observer name:
Description notes: descriptions of the researcher's introduction by the faculty participant	Reflective Notes
Description notes: researcher's observations and the student and instructor conversations	Description notes: description of student demographics

Observations that assess whether faculty are teaching compassionate leadership though their pedagogy, lecture, curriculum, and content related to the theoretical framework: Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of emotional intelligence (EI; 1997):

1. Do the faculty participant and students manage emotions to attain specific goals?	
2. Do the faculty participants and students understand emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions?	
3. Do the faculty participants and students use emotions to facilitate thinking?	
4. Do the faculty participants and students perceive emotions accurately in oneself and others?	

Observations that assess whether faculty are teaching compassionate leadership though their pedagogy, lecture, curriculum, and content related to the conceptual framework: the Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership: Compassionate leadership is described as "a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth" (Ramachandran et al., 2023, p. 55).

1. Are there any observations to make regarding compassionate care?	
2. Are there any observations to make regarding selflessness?	
3. Are there any observations to make regarding wisdom?	
4. Are there any observations to make regarding integrity?	
5. Are there any observations to make regarding empathy?	
6. Are there any observations to make regarding accountability?	
7. Are there any observations to make regarding authenticity?	
8. Are there any observations to make regarding presence?	
9. Are there any observations to make regarding dignity?	
10. Are there any observations to make regarding self-compassion?	
11. Are there any observations to make regarding self-development?	

Appendix E: Document Analysis Guide (Rainey, 2024)

What components of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills?

Documents to be reviewed: course syllabi, textbook, extra credit assignment

Documents related to theoretical framework: Mayer and Salovey's four-branch model of emotional intelligence (EI; 1997)

EI Model Component	Document or Source	Data Analyzed	Location/ source and author/creator	Original purpose of item
Do the students manage emotions to attain specific goals?				
Do the students understand emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions?				
Do the students use emotions to facilitate thinking?				
Do the students perceive emotions accurately in oneself and others?				

Documents related to conceptual framework: the Ramachandran et al. (2023) definition of compassionate leadership: Compassionate leadership (CL) is described as "a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of compassionate care, selflessness, wisdom, integrity, empathy, accountability, authenticity, presence, dignity, self-compassion, and self-development as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth" (Ramachandran et al., 2023, p. 55).

CL Component	Document or Source	Data Analyzed	Location/ source and author/creator	Original purpose of item
Compassionate care				
Selflessness				
Wisdom				
Integrity				
Empathy				
Accountability				
Authenticity				
Presence				
Dignity				
Self-compassion				
Self-development				

Appendix F: Qualifying Demographic Questionnaire

1. **Name**: ____
2. Student or Faculty
3. Gender: Please indicate your gender(s). Select all that apply.

   ☐Man

   ☐ Woman

   ☐ Non-binary

   ☐ Another option not listed here (please specify): ______

   ☐ I prefer not to answer

4. **Please select your age range** (U.S. Department of Education, 2016):

   ☐ 16–18 years

   ☐ 19–24 years

   ☐ 25–44 years

   ☐ 45–59 years

   ☐ 60 years and older

5. Please indicate your race-ethnicity(ies). Select all that apply.

   ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

   ☐ Asian or Asian American

   ☐ Black or African American

   ☐ Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx

   ☐ Middle Eastern or Northern African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White

☐ Another option not listed here (please specify): _____

☐ I prefer not to answer this question [exclusive]

6. **Email**: ____

7. **Phone Number**: _______________________________________

If you are a faculty participant, please stop answering survey after question 7.

8. Anticipated graduation date _________________

9. Education program currently enrolled in:

☐ Undergraduate

☐ Graduate

10. Current major or concentration

Please Specify __________________________

11. Industry you would like to enter after graduation

Please Specify __________________________

12. Profession you would like to enter after graduation

Please Specify __________________________

Fredrick, J.K. (2020). Four Strategies for Crafting Inclusive and Effective Demographic Questions. Ithaka S+R. https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/four-strategies-for-crafting-inclusive-and-effective-demographic-questions/

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Implementation Guidelines. Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education. Division of Adult Education and Literacy Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Contract No. ED-VAE-10-O-0107.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED584415.pdf

Appendix G: Self-Reported Compassionate Leadership Scale Assessment

(Maietta & Rainey, 2024)

Directions: On the scales below, please indicate the degree to which you believe the following statement. Numbers “1” and “7” indicate a very strong feeling. Numbers “2” and “6” indicate a strong feeling. Numbers “3” and “5” indicate a fairly week feeling. Number “4” indicates you are undecided or do not understand the adjective pairs themselves. There are no right or wrong answers. Only circle one number per line.

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **compassionate care** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **selflessness** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **wisdom** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

"I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **integrity** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth."

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

"I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **empathy** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth."

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct

4) Right 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Wrong

5) Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **accountability** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

2) False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 True

3) Incorrect 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Correct

4) Right 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Wrong

5) Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **authenticity** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Disagree

2) False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 True

3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of organizational **presence** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **dignity** towards others as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **self-compassion** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

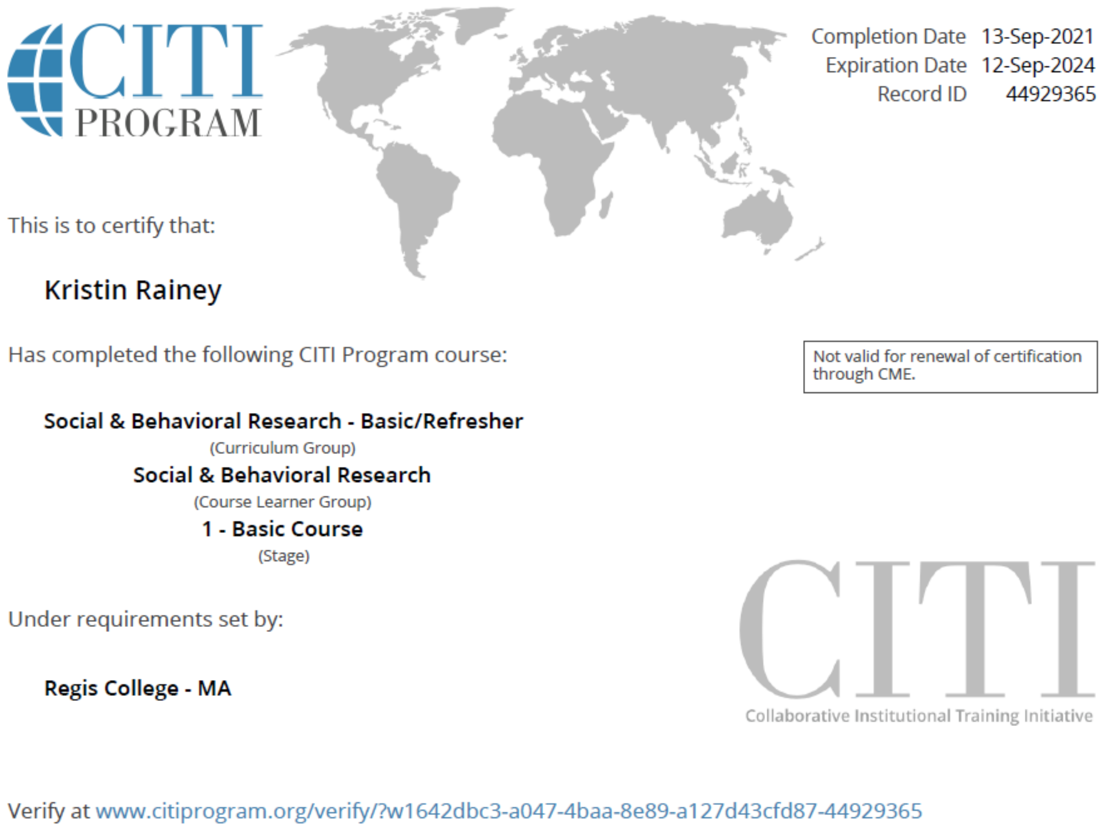
1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong

5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

“I have a personality that includes the characteristics and behaviors of **self-development** as a means to guiding others to reach personal and organizational growth.”

1) Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disagree
2) False	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	True
3) Incorrect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Correct
4) Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
5) Yes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	No

Appendix H: CITI Training Completion Certificate



Completion Date 13-Sep-2021
Expiration Date 12-Sep-2024
Record ID 44929365

This is to certify that:

Kristin Rainey

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

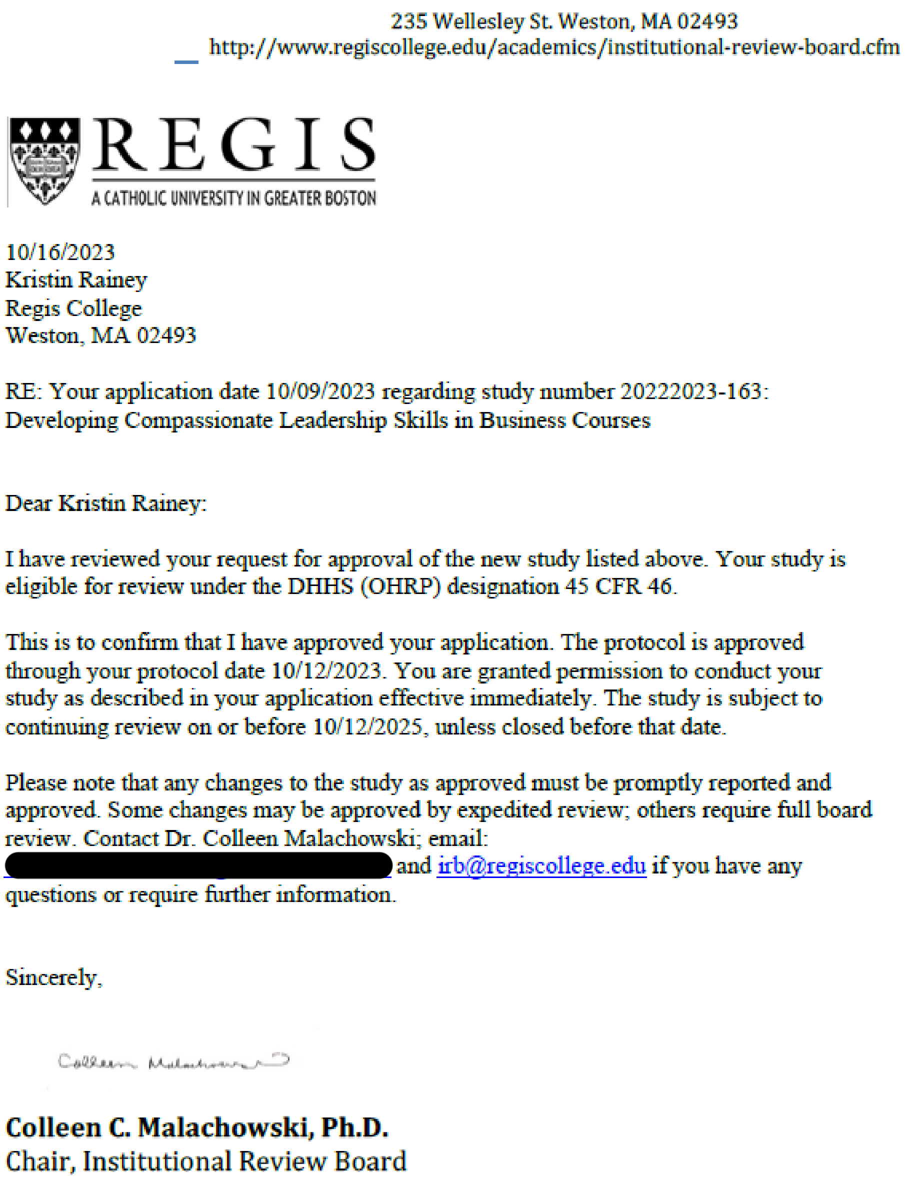
Under requirements set by:

Regis College - MA

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w1642dbc3-a047-4baa-8e89-a127d43cfd87-44929365

Appendix I: Regis College IRB Approval Letter



235 Wellesley St. Weston, MA 02493
http://www.regiscollege.edu/academics/institutional-review-board.cfm

REGIS
A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN GREATER BOSTON

10/16/2023
Kristin Rainey
Regis College
Weston, MA 02493

RE: Your application date 10/09/2023 regarding study number 20222023-163:
Developing Compassionate Leadership Skills in Business Courses

Dear Kristin Rainey:

I have reviewed your request for approval of the new study listed above. Your study is eligible for review under the DHHS (OHRP) designation 45 CFR 46.

This is to confirm that I have approved your application. The protocol is approved through your protocol date 10/12/2023. You are granted permission to conduct your study as described in your application effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before 10/12/2025, unless closed before that date.

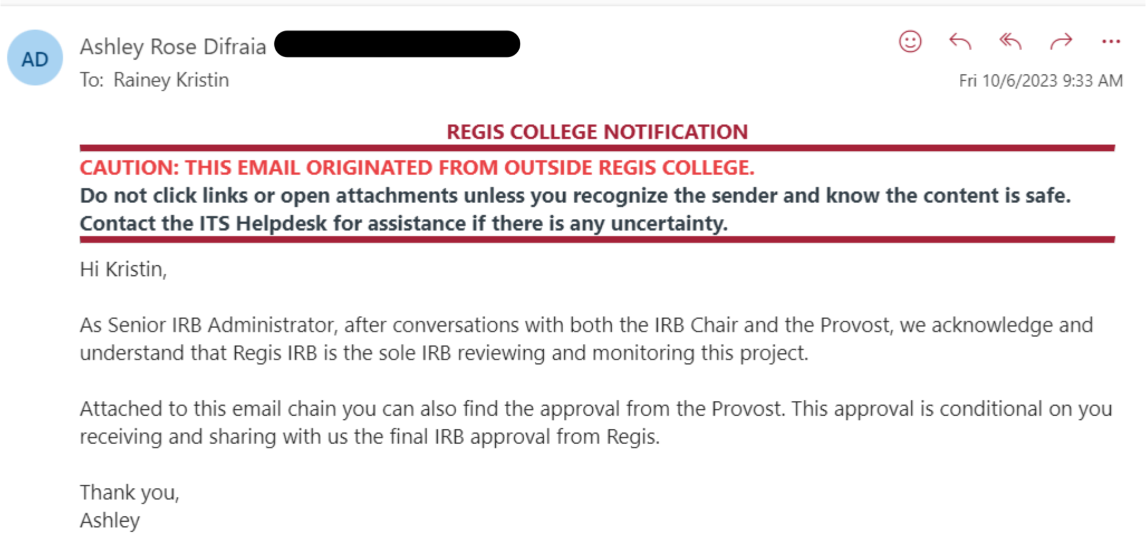
Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Dr. Colleen Malachowski; email: [redacted] and irb@regiscollege.edu if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Colleen Malachowski

Colleen C. Malachowski, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Appendix J: Site Permission Letter to Perform Research From Administrator



Ashley Rose Difraia [redacted]
To: Rainey Kristin
Fri 10/6/2023 9:33 AM

REGIS COLLEGE NOTIFICATION

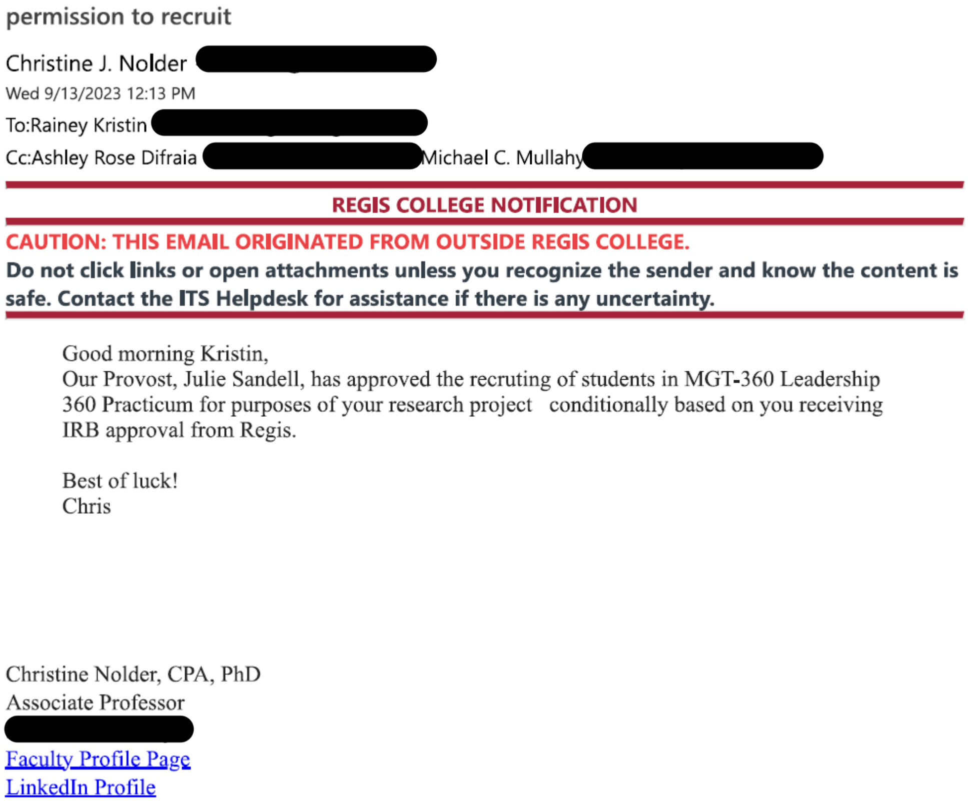
CAUTION: THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED FROM OUTSIDE REGIS COLLEGE.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Contact the ITS Helpdesk for assistance if there is any uncertainty.

Hi Kristin,

As Senior IRB Administrator, after conversations with both the IRB Chair and the Provost, we acknowledge and understand that Regis IRB is the sole IRB reviewing and monitoring this project.

Attached to this email chain you can also find the approval from the Provost. This approval is conditional on you receiving and sharing with us the final IRB approval from Regis.

Thank you,
Ashley



permission to recruit

Christine J. Nolder [redacted]
Wed 9/13/2023 12:13 PM
To:Rainey Kristin [redacted]
Cc:Ashley Rose Difraia [redacted] Michael C. Mullahy [redacted]

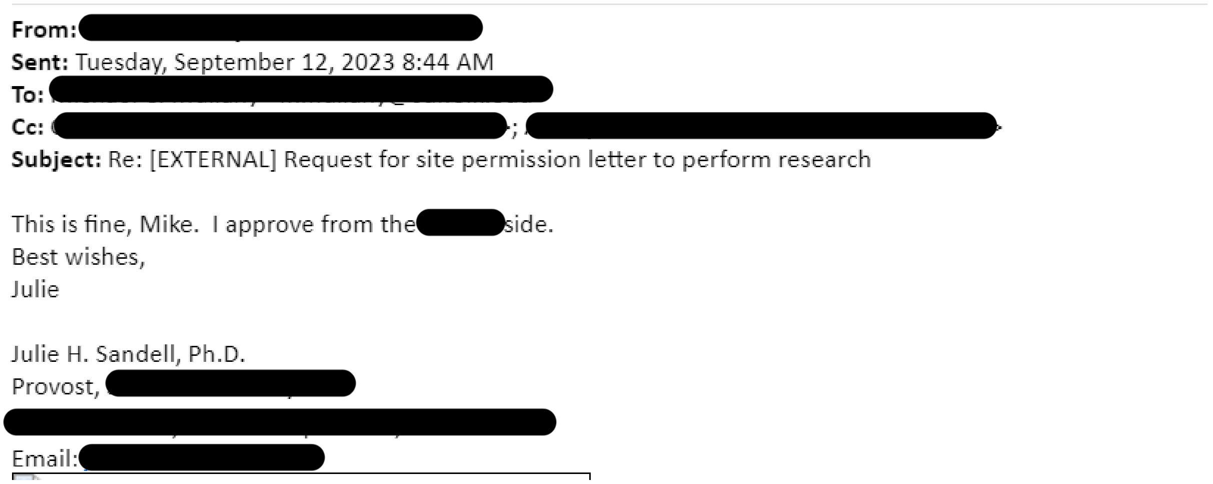
REGIS COLLEGE NOTIFICATION

CAUTION: THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED FROM OUTSIDE REGIS COLLEGE.
Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Contact the ITS Helpdesk for assistance if there is any uncertainty.

Good morning Kristin,
Our Provost, Julie Sandell, has approved the recruting of students in MGT-360 Leadership 360 Practicum for purposes of your research project conditionally based on you receiving IRB approval from Regis.

Best of luck!
Chris

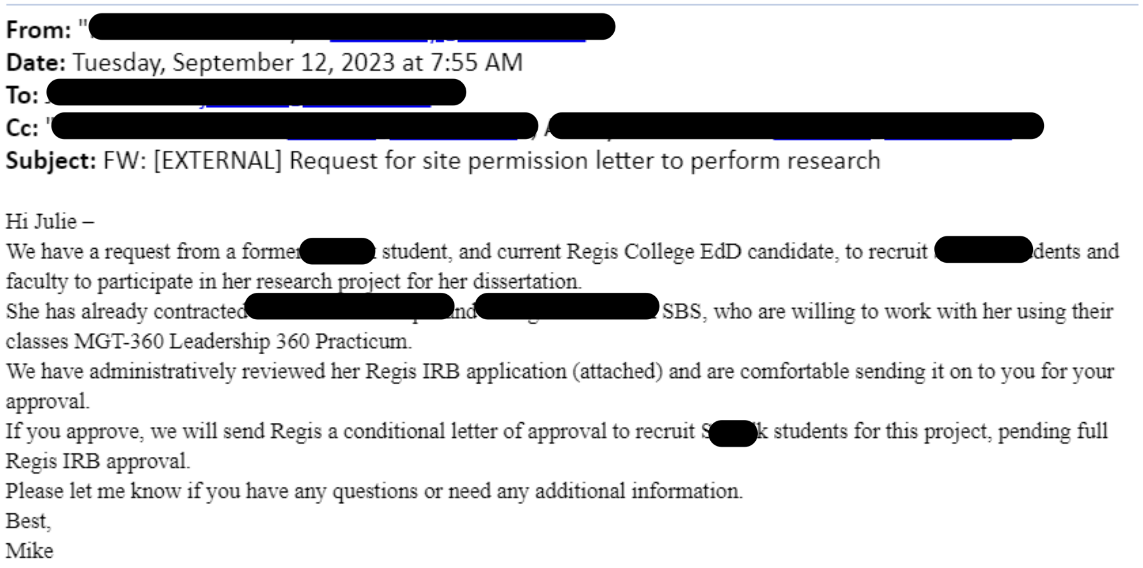
Christine Nolder, CPA, PhD
Associate Professor
[redacted]
Faculty Profile Page
LinkedIn Profile



From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:44 AM
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Request for site permission letter to perform research

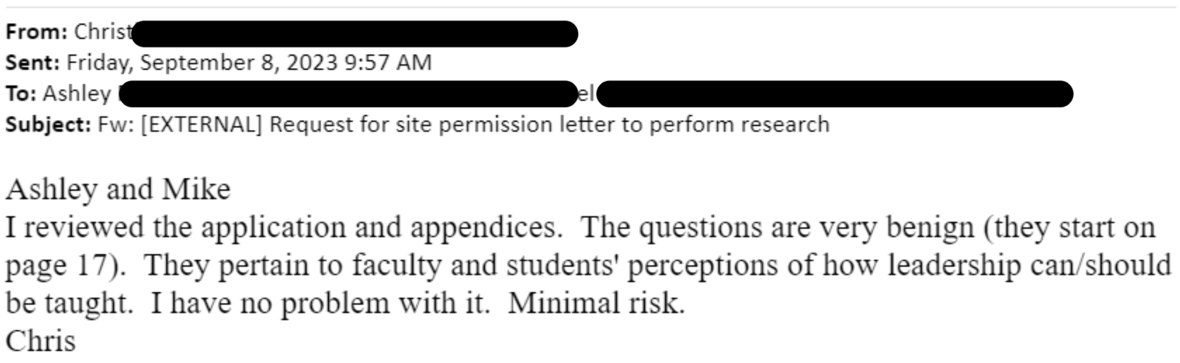
This is fine, Mike. I approve from the [redacted] side.
Best wishes,
Julie

Julie H. Sandell, Ph.D.
Provost, [redacted]
[redacted]
Email: [redacted]



From: "[redacted]
Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 7:55 AM
To: [redacted]
Cc: '[redacted] [redacted]
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Request for site permission letter to perform research

Hi Julie –
We have a request from a former[redacted] student, and current Regis College EdD candidate, to recruit [redacted]dents and faculty to participate in her research project for her dissertation.
She has already contracted[redacted]nd[redacted] SBS, who are willing to work with her using their classes MGT-360 Leadership 360 Practicum.
We have administratively reviewed her Regis IRB application (attached) and are comfortable sending it on to you for your approval.
If you approve, we will send Regis a conditional letter of approval to recruit S[redacted]k students for this project, pending full Regis IRB approval.
Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.
Best,
Mike



From: Christ[redacted]
Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 9:57 AM
To: Ashley [redacted]el[redacted]
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Request for site permission letter to perform research

Ashley and Mike
I reviewed the application and appendices. The questions are very benign (they start on page 17). They pertain to faculty and students' perceptions of how leadership can/should be taught. I have no problem with it. Minimal risk.
Chris

Appendix K: Informed Consent Form

Regis College EdD Higher Education Administration

Informed Consent to Participate in Developing Compassionate Leadership Skills in Business Courses

Researcher: Kristin Rainey (PI)

Introduction

Please read this form carefully. This study looks at what elements of a business leadership course help business students develop compassionate leadership skills and to what extent do business students and faculty believe they possess compassionate leadership skills. In order to be involved in the study, you must:

1) You are the current professor of the selected course.

OR

2) You are a current student in the selected business leadership course.

AND

3) You completed the surveys.
4) Are involved in all study parts, including a single one-on-one, one hour interview.

Please ask any questions you may have before you agree to take part in the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to look at what elements of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills. The findings from this study may help improve course design and learning in business leadership courses to assist students in further developing compassionate leadership skills.

Description of Study Details

Upon Institutional Review Board approval, you will complete a survey through a link provided by the individual leading the study. If you meet the requirements, you will receive an email to schedule a one-hour ZOOM interview. The interview will be recorded.

Benefits of Being in this Study

There are no direct benefits to individuals for their involvement in this study. However, this research may help professors improve business leadership courses to include elements of compassionate leadership.

Risks and Harms of Being in this Study

The study does not have any expected risks.

To the extent the study requires or involves physical contact with other people or otherwise happens within space shared with other individuals, there is a risk of transmission of and/or infection by the disease including, but not limited to, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The study will be conducted in agreement with local, state, and federal guidance related to COVID-19, but despite these efforts, the risks of transmission and/or infection cannot be completely removed.

Payments

Individuals will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Cost

Other than your contribution of time to this study, there is no additional cost to you for being in this research study**.**

The Choice to Take Part in the Study and the Choice to Quit the Study

It is your choice to be involved in this study. If you choose not to be involved in this study, it will not affect your current or future relations with Regis. You are free to decline to answer questions or quit at any point for any reason. There is no penalty for not taking part or for leaving the study. Being involved or not being involved in the study will not impact the student's academic status. Being involved or not being involved in the study will not impact a professor's employment status.

Getting Dismissed from the Study

The researcher may ask you to leave the study at any time because you have not followed the study's rules.

Privacy

The records of this study will be kept private, and this study is private. Research records will be locked. Only the lead researcher will have access to the study records, which will be destroyed after 5 years. The records will be kept private. The research reports and data will be maintained in a protected and safe location. Personal data will be removed. Personal identifiers, such as names, will be replaced with pseudonyms. The study's responses will be combined. The final published reports will not include any personal information.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher leading this study is Kristin Rainey. The researcher will be available to answer any questions about the study at XXX-XXX-XXXX or xxxxx@regiscollege.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights, you may contact the Regis Institutional Review Board Chair:

Dr. Colleen C. Malachowski, PhD
XXX-XXX-XXXX
xxxxx@regiscollege.edu

Statement of Consent

I have read this form (or have had it read to me). I have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I understand the risks and harms associated with the above study and that I may quit the study at any time without penalty.

Participant's Initials _______

I agree to be audio and/or video recorded (Check One):

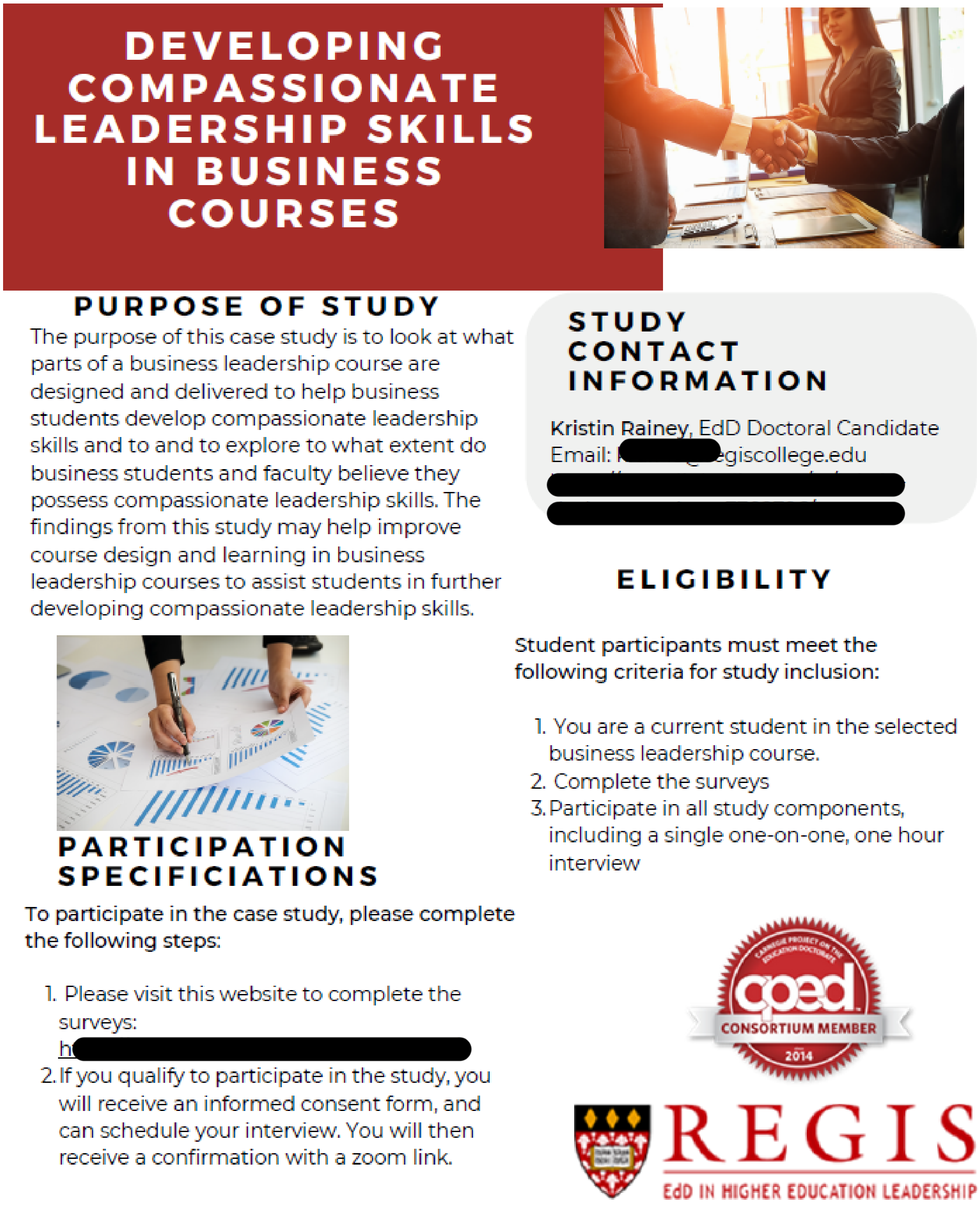
_____Yes _____No

Signature(s)/Date

Participant Printed Name: ___________________________________

Participant Signature: ___________________________________ Date: __________

Appendix L: Case Study Recruitment for Student Interviews



DEVELOPING COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN BUSINESS COURSES

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this case study is to look at what parts of a business leadership course are designed and delivered to help business students develop compassionate leadership skills and to and to explore to what extent do business students and faculty believe they possess compassionate leadership skills. The findings from this study may help improve course design and learning in business leadership courses to assist students in further developing compassionate leadership skills.

PARTICIPATION SPECIFICIATIONS

To participate in the case study, please complete the following steps:

1. Please visit this website to complete the surveys: [redacted]
2. If you qualify to participate in the study, you will receive an informed consent form, and can schedule your interview. You will then receive a confirmation with a zoom link.

STUDY CONTACT INFORMATION

Kristin Rainey, EdD Doctoral Candidate
Email: [redacted]egiscollege.edu
[redacted]

ELIGIBILITY

Student participants must meet the following criteria for study inclusion:

1. You are a current student in the selected business leadership course.
2. Complete the surveys
3. Participate in all study components, including a single one-on-one, one hour interview

cped
CONSORTIUM MEMBER
2014

REGIS
EdD IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Appendix M: Syllabi for Undergraduate Compassionate Leadership Course for Business Students

Course Number (TBD)

Semester (TBD)

Time and Location (TBD)

Instructor Information (TBD)

Office Hours (TBD)

Course Information

Course Description

Compassionate leadership is an exciting and new topic in leadership development. In this course, students will learn about various aspects of compassionate leadership development, such as emotional intelligence (EI) and intercultural competence. They will also learn about 360-degree feedback reviews, diversity training, and the hiring of executive coaches to increase compassion and EI throughout the organization. This course provides understanding and connect tools in leadership to meet business objectives. The course is designed to help students to develop their compassionate leadership toolkit and to give them industry-relevant applied assignments, such as case study analysis, group presentations, the writing of personal leadership development plan (PLDP), and experiential learning activities, such as live leader presentations and interviews, role-play activities, in-class discussions and volunteer experiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Discuss** emotional intelligence (EI) and intercultural competence

- **Develop** compassionate leadership skills effective for professional settings.
- **Use** assessment tools to measure EI and intercultural competence levels.
- **Discuss** various methods to increase compassion and EI throughout organizations.
- **Interpret**, **translate, and create** personal results from EI and intercultural competence assessments to create a personal leadership development plan (PLDP).
- **Analyze** business case studies focusing on compassionate leadership.
- **Evaluate** compassionate leadership skill development through experiential learning activities, such as live leader presentations and interviews, role-play activities, in-class discussions.
- **Describe** the application of compassionate leadership skills when participating in volunteer activities.

Course Materials

1. Course textbook (E-book or print edition): DuBrin, A. J. (2019*). Leadership: Research findings, practice, and skills* (9th ed.). Cengage.
2. Goleman, D. (2019). *The emotionally intelligent leader*. Harvard Business Review Press.
3. Student Access to Hammer (2019) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
4. Student Access to The Emotional Intelligence Training Company’s EQ-i 2.0 assessment
5. Lecture slides, supplemental readings, and relevant videos are provided in Canvas.
6. Project and assignment materials are provided in Canvas.

Grading will be based on your performance on the following evaluation instruments:

Assignment	**Points**	**%**
Attendance and Participation	20	10%
Assignments (2 @ 15) : live leader interview paper/presentation, group presentation	30	15%
EI and Intercultural Competence Assessment and Reflection Paper (2 @ 35)	70	35%
personal leadership development plan (PLDP)	70	35%
5 Hours of either volunteering or attendance of student association meeting	10	5%
Total	**200**	**100%**

1. **Attendance and Participation**. Students must be physically present in order to count towards class participation. Students must volunteer to answer questions, discuss the assigned readings, and engage in in-class activities, to receive participation points. Students should read before class, come to class regularly, and participate in class discussions and activities (20 points).
2. **Assignments**: Throughout the semester, students will complete two assignments (one team assignment and one individual assignment). The instructions and grading rubrics for each assignment are provided on course Canvas. The assignments as listed below:
    a. **Assignment 1**: Live leader interview, with paper and presentation. This is an individual assignment which requires students to interview a leader of an organization (pre-assigned by the professor). Students must interview the leaders

    and ask for them 1) to provide them with their personal definition of compassionate leadership, 2) to describe how it looks at their organization, and 3) to provide ideas/suggestion for organizations to cultivate compassion throughout their organization (15 points, paper: 5-7 pages; presentation 10-20 slides).

    b. **Assignment 2**: Group Organization Presentation. This is a team assignment which requires students to work together by selecting an organization or corporation to examine and explore the presence of compassionate leadership. Students will spend time during class working on this project, and will present their findings to the entire class (15 points, presentation 10-20 slides).

3. **Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Intercultural Competence Assessment and Reflection Papers.** Students will complete an EI assessment through a tool, such as The Emotional Intelligence Training Company's EQ-i 2.0 assessment. Students will also participate in intercultural competence training, and will complete the Hammer (2019) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), along with completing their individualized Intercultural Development Plan (IDP). Students will complete two written reflection papers about both assessments (70 points, 35 points for each reflection paper; paper: 5-7 pages; in-class debrief).
4. **Personal leadership development plan (PLDP).** The PLDP will serve as the final paper for the course, where the student reflects on their own compassionate leadership attitudes and skills (70 points, paper: 10 pages; in-class debrief) .
5. **5 Hours of either volunteering or attendance of student association meeting**. Students will have the opportunity to attend either several student government board meetings

(sub-committee of their choosing) or to volunteer 5 hours at a local non-profit organization (10 points, in-class debrief).

Note: Students are required to provide in-text citations and references for their work following the APA style guidelines.

Required Student Course Effort

Over the course of the semester students are expected to put in 180 hours of dedicated time to meet the requirements of this course. This effort is divided as follows for the semester:

Task	**Estimated Hours**
Book Reading and Lectures	30
In-class discussions	30
Assignments	60
Projects	55
5 Hours of either volunteering or attendance of student association meeting	5
Total	**180**

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to any information contained in this syllabus at any time during the semester. An updated version of the syllabus will be discussed and distributed to students if changes are made.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE IS PROVIDED IN NEXT PAGE

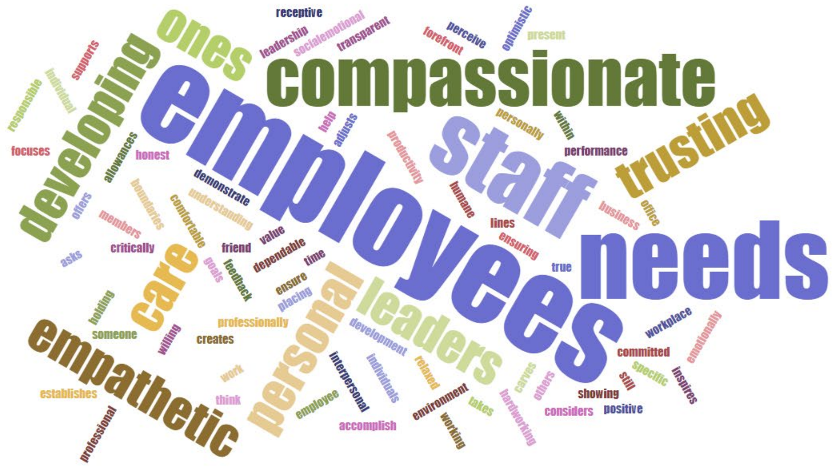
Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Please review the course Canvas for the most up-to-date information.

Week (Dates)	**Topics/Readings**	**Activities/Workshops and Assignments (Due Dates)**
1/13/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 1. The Nature and Importance of Leadership.	In-class role play activity
1/20/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 2. Traits, Motives, and Characteristics of Leaders.	In-class article (TBD) analysis and discussion
1/27/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 3. Charismatic and Transformational Leadership.	In-class article (TBD) analysis and discussion
2/3/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 4. Leadership Behaviors, Attitudes, and Styles.	In-class article (TBD) analysis and discussion
2/10/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 5. Contingency and Situational Leadership.	In-class article (TBD) analysis and discussion
2/17/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 6. Leadership Ethics and Social Responsibility. Goleman, Part 1	In-class article (TBD) analysis and discussion
2/24/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 7. Power, Politics, and Leadership. Goleman, Part 2	**Live Leader paper due and presentation to class**
3/3/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 8. Influence Tactics of Leaders. Goleman, Part 3	In-class article analysis and discussion
3/10/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 9. Developing Teamwork.	In-class article analysis (TBD) and discussion
3/17/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 10. Motivation and Coaching Skills.	EI Assessment during class
3/24/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 11. Creativity, Innovation, and Leadership.	**EI Reflection paper due, and in-class debrief**
3/31/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 12. Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills.	Intercultural Competence Assessment during class
4/7/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 13. Strategic Leadership and Knowledge Management.	**Intercultural Competence paper due, and in-class debrief**
4/14/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 14. International and Culturally Diverse Aspects of Leadership.	Group presentation research and planning
4/21/2025	DuBrin, Chapter 15. Leadership, Development, and Succession.	Group presentation research and planning
4/28/2025		**Final Group Presentation (last week of classes)**
5/5/2025		**Personal leadership development plan (PLDP) due**

**** The 5 Hours of either volunteering or attendance of student association meeting course requirement can occur throughout the semester***

Appendix N: Revised definition for Compassionate Leadership


employees
compassionate
needs
staff
developing
trusting
empathetic
personal
leaders
care
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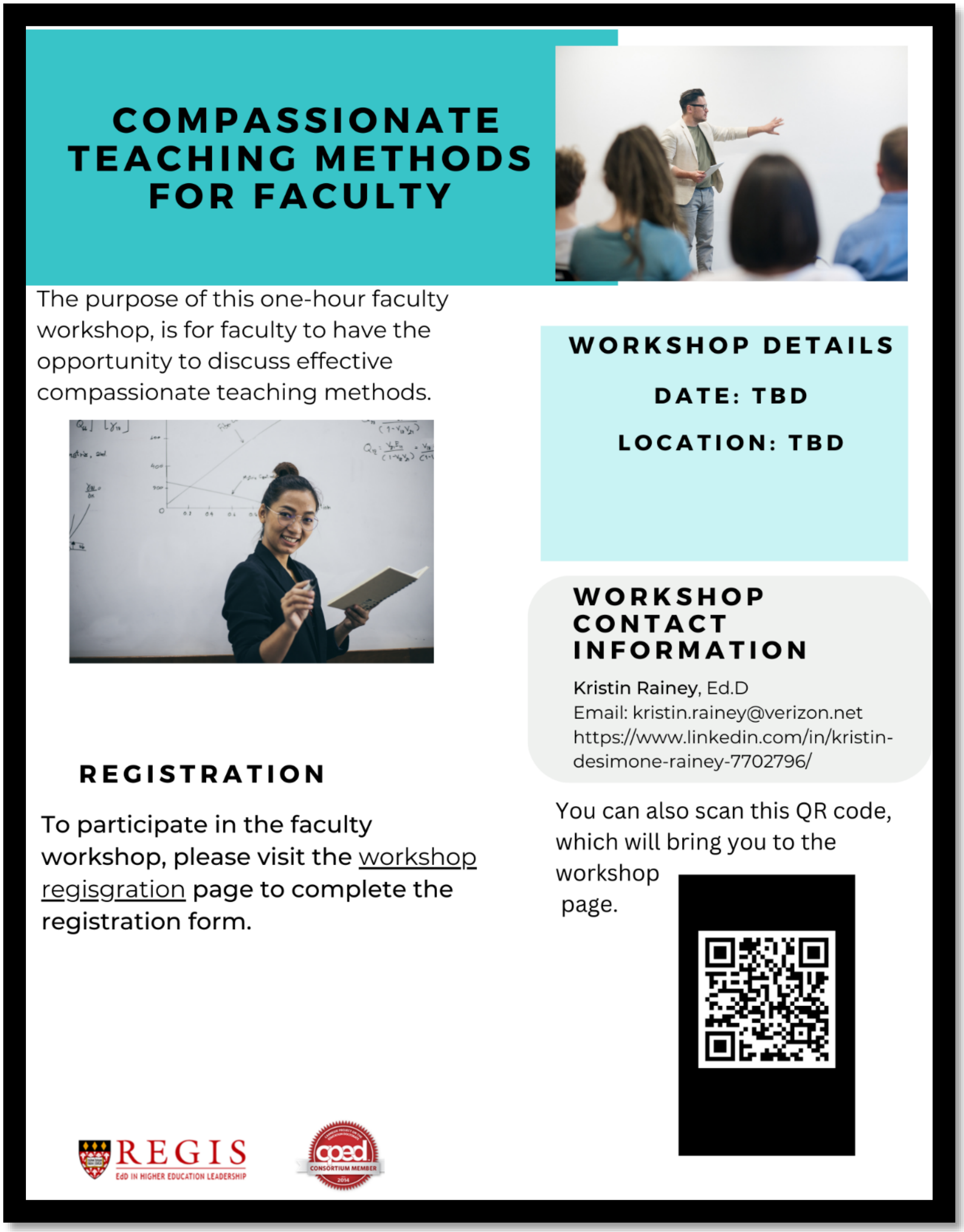
Word Cloud Generation Source: https://www.jasondavies.com/wordcloud

Researcher's revised definition for Compassionate Leadership

A Compassionate Leader is an individual who focuses on the development and needs of others by instilling trust, by providing empathetic care, and by building personal connections.

Appendix O: Flyer for Faculty Workshop In Compassionate Teaching Methods



COMPASSIONATE TEACHING METHODS FOR FACULTY

The purpose of this one-hour faculty workshop, is for faculty to have the opportunity to discuss effective compassionate teaching methods.

WORKSHOP DETAILS

DATE: TBD

LOCATION: TBD

WORKSHOP CONTACT INFORMATION

Kristin Rainey, Ed.D
Email: kristin.rainey@verizon.net
https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristin-desimone-rainey-7702796/

REGISTRATION

To participate in the faculty workshop, please visit the workshop regisgration page to complete the registration form.

You can also scan this QR code, which will bring you to the workshop page.

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CONSORTIUM MEMBER